Daria Donnelly CHILDREN'S BOOKS NEW YORK CITY FIREFIGHTERS

COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

November 23, 2001

YOUNG CATHOLICS NOW!

James Fisher

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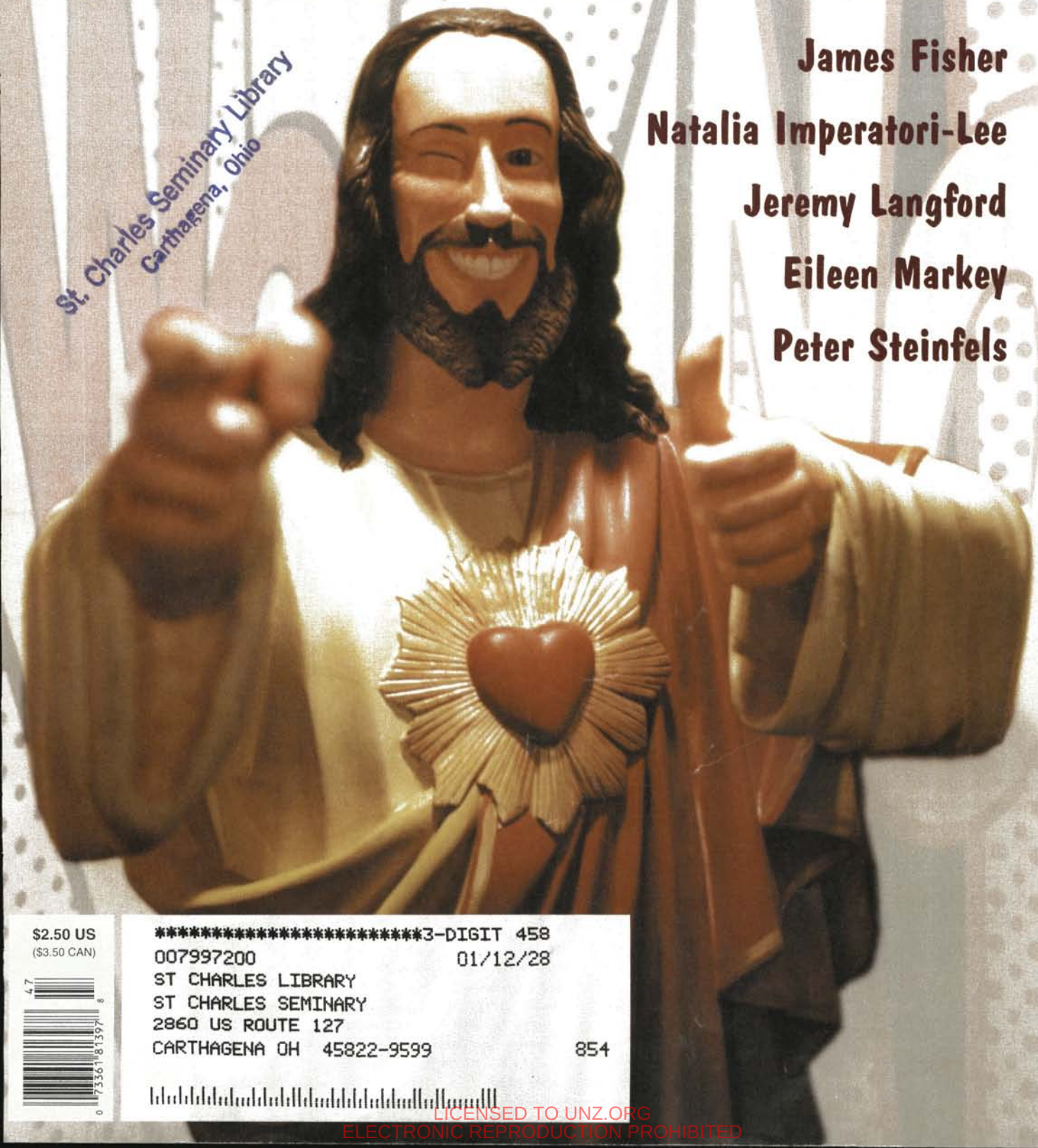

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To the Editors

Resurrecting Powers

I'm very happy to see that J. F. Powers is again coming into his own (John Garvey, "Not a Wasted Word," October 12).

He was a wonderful writer and certainly a light shining in and on the U.S. Catholic Church of the forties and fifties. Thank you, John Garvey, for an updated view of Powers's writing gifts.

In my distant youth, J.F.P. taught a creative writing course that I took. I was, perhaps, too young to get what was available in that classroom but I remember someone asking him, "Why do you always write about priests? Do you consider yourself anticlerical?"

Powers thought very carefully about those questions, looked at his student, and said in his deliberative way: "I'm not anticlerical. I simply look for a story that elucidates truth. If a human being buys an insurance policy, that's not much of a story. But when a priest buys an insurance policy, there's something going on that needs to be said and I want to say it."

I especially remember Powers's deep blue eyes. He could look at you as if he saw where your soul's energy originated. R.I.P., J.F.P.

ANNE LAURANCE
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Kudos to Pfaff

Just wanted to let you know that many of us appreciate the quality and clarity of William Pfaff's analysis of the motivation of Islamic fundamentalists ("Seeds of War," October 26).

LYNNE HELLEBUST
Topeka, Kans.

Quoting Acton

In Dennis O'Brien's admirably lucid discussion of "Power and Powerlessness" (October 26), there is a minor flaw deriving from of a common misquotation. What Lord Acton actually wrote was "Power tends to corrupt." This wording, implying that power does not necessarily corrupt, aligns comfortably with O'Brien's eloquent response to some leftist critics of U.S. policy.

EDWARD CALLAN
Kalamazoo, Mich.

Roots of terrorism

The conclusion of your October 26 editorial ("So far...") leaves a dangerous impression, which we hope you did not intend. You urge the intellectual community, and especially liberals, to reject explanations of the terrorists' motives which seem to justify their murderous actions. If you are referring strictly to Osama bin Laden's anti-U.S. diatribes, then your point is well taken.

But your warning against "explanations" (which you put in scorn quotes) seems more general, giving the impression that you scoff at all attempts to understand the root causes of terrorism in the world.

Surely you don't include, among explanations to be rejected, those like the analysis of Archbishop Renato Martino, the Vatican's permanent observer at the United Nations, in his October 16 address:

"We do a disservice to those who have died in this tragedy if we fail to search out the causes. Here a broad canvas of political, economic, social, religious, and cultural factors emerge...Though poverty is not by itself the cause of terrorism, we cannot successfully combat terrorism if we do not address the worsening disparities between the rich and poor... Poverty along with other situations of marginalization that engulf the lives of so many of the world's people, including the denial of human dignity, the lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, social exclusion, intolerable refugee situations, internal and external displacement and physical or psychological oppression are breeding grounds only waiting to be exploited by terrorists. In searching out the root causes of terrorism, we are in no way condoning terrorism. But any serious crime reduction effort cannot be confined only to intensified police work. Any serious campaign against terrorism needs to address the social, economic, and political conditions that nurture the emergence of terrorism."

This short excerpt doesn't do justice to the depth and breadth of Archbishop Martino's remarks, which move into complex issues of world conflict reduction. Your editorial calls intellectuals to a "sense of responsibility" in this crisis. We'd be grateful to find *Commonweal* sharing in that responsibility by, for instance, reprinting the whole of Archbishop Martino's address.

(REV.) JOHN COLACINO, C.PP.S.
GEORGE DARDESS
(REV.) ROBERT J. KENNEDY
MARVIN MICH
PEGGY ROSENTHAL
Rochester, N.Y.

The editors reply:

The best information available at this time indicates that the "motives" of those responsible for the World Trade Center bombings had nothing to do with the amelioration of poverty or the expansion of political freedom. Their self-proclaimed rationale was based in religious absolutism and political fanaticism, thus in this instance the search for the "root causes" of terrorism points more to the need to combat evil in the world than to the question of economic injustice. But, as we assume our letter writers agree, even if the terrorists' actions were rooted in the disparities between rich and poor, that would still not in any way justify what happened on September 11.

The full text of Archbishop Martino's address can be found at www.zenit.org.

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COMMONWEAL

November 23, 2001 / Volume CXXVIII, Number 20

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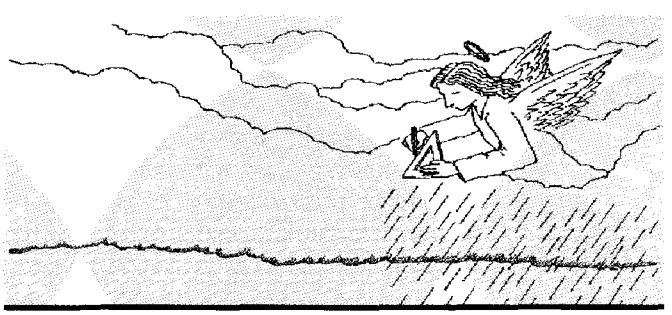

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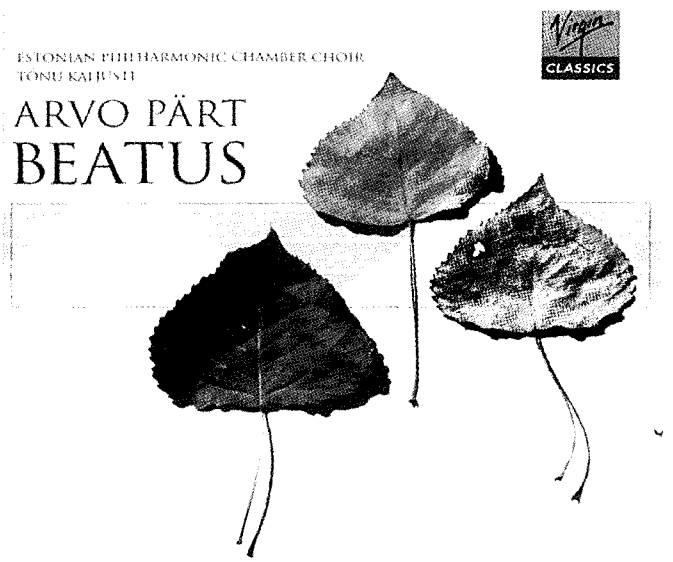

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False dichotomy

Congratulations to Mary Ann Glendon for her enriching article on "The Sources of 'Rights Talk,'" (October 12), an article I will certainly use in my own classes in ethics. There is, however, one point I should like to enlarge on. "Many Catholics," Glendon writes, "were surprised, and some were even shocked, at the extent to which the documents of Vatican II, and John XXIII's encyclicals...seemed to reflect a shift from natural law to human rights."

The surprise or shock some Catholics experienced would have been less, or nonexistent, if they were aware that the "shift" in question was only terminological. A consistent philosophical effort since the Enlightenment tried to retire the supernatural from the human sphere and to found human values on the natural alone, hence it was an effort to dislodge "natural law" in favor of "human rights." The church documents cited clearly reject such a separation; it is a false dichotomy. For Saint Thomas, natural law is the human being's participation in the eternal law and is not to be thought of as a changeless Platonic entity to be contemplated and then translated into human action. It is quite the other way around: When we see that an action is right, that it befits what it means to be human, it is thereby understood as a dictate of our nature, a natural law. It is, in short, our understanding of the rightness or oughtness of an action that is the natural law. Human rights, because they befit our nature, are dictates of our nature and are therefore encompassed by the natural law. That's why there is no dichotomy between the two.

ALBERT B. HAKIM
Summit, N.J.

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Visiting Professor for Fall 2001

February 28, 2002, 7:30 PM
Mary Gordon
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Robert McAfree Brown

There are great teachers and people who influence your life, but Robert McAfee Brown stands out as a star in a world of trouble and confusion. His death is such a sad note.

In my own life as a Roman Catholic he taught me to look at my own tradition and to see our two traditions (Bob's enlightened and evangelical Presbyterianism and our own sometimes haughty Romanism) as in a joyful, embracing, complementing, pilgrimage.

In my book, *The People versus Rome* (Random House), Bob was one of my heroes whom I asked to add to the pages his philosophy and wisdom.

Bob Brown: pastor, theologian, teacher, novelist, friend. We will miss him. The wit and the wisdom.

JOHN A. O'CONNOR
Port Angeles Wash.

From the editors: Robert McAfee Brown died on September 4, 2001. Throughout the 1960s, Professor Brown was a regular contributor to *Commonweal*. In addition to reviews and articles, he wrote a column, "A Protestant Viewpoint," the first installment of which appeared in the issue dated January 4, 1963. It was a sign of the times that an editorial took note of the column's first appearance: "There was a time, not many years ago, when the appearance of a Protestant theologian in the pages of a Catholic journal would have been unthinkable." Well, the unthinkable was attempted and proved successful.

Brown began that first column by professing to be in a state of "fear and trembling" at the prospect of writing for Catholics but, ecumenist that he was, he concluded by noting that one function of the column was his "writing not primarily as a Protestant to Catholics, dealing with points of difference, but writing rather as a Christian to fellow Christians, presupposing points of conviction we already share,

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Hit & run

United States foreign policy is up and running, seriously engaged in building an international coalition against terrorism. Seems like only yesterday that Mexico presented our most pressing foreign-policy problem. President Vicente Fox and President George W. Bush agreed that good relations between the two nations depended on regularizing the status of Mexican citizens working illegally in the United States. Today, Fox and undocumented Mexican workers have been eclipsed by the war on terror and the ratcheting upward of U.S. immigration controls. Not surprising perhaps, but that Mexico has slipped as a foreign-policy priority is symptomatic of the post-cold war American propensity for disregarding the interests of allies whenever our attention is drawn elsewhere, as if we can attend to only one foreign-policy problem at a time. There are consequences to this neglect—as the current crisis in Central Asia amply demonstrates.

After September 11 we must tend to our very bad relations with the Pakistanis, as well as shaky relations with Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Indians along with other members of the coalition summoned to help the United States fight terrorism.

Pakistan, once among our closest allies, collaborated with the CIA during the seventies and eighties to defeat the Soviet military in Afghanistan. We funded and armed the Afghan Mujahedin to whose cause Osama bin Laden and other Arab Muslims were recruited. The Afghanis finally forced the Russians to retreat and soon thereafter the Soviet Empire collapsed. Having no real interest in Afghanistan, the United States left its people to a miserable civil war. Then, Pakistan fell out of favor because of human-rights violations and its nuclear weapons program; ultimately, we imposed economic sanctions. Now we need Pakistan again, to curb its ally the Taliban who have ruled much of Afghanistan since the end of its civil war and to help us find bin Laden, the man behind the September 11 terrorist attacks.

President Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military dictator, has agreed to assist, though this is risky to his own hold on power; there are members of his government sympathetic to the Taliban. For his support, Musharraf wants, as he says, some significant gestures that recognize Pakistan's grievances against the United States, for example, the twenty-eight F-16 fighter planes it purchased in the eighties, which we subsequently refused to deliver and will continue to hold back, according to Secretary of State Colin Powell. For the F-16s will not be used against the Taliban, but to threaten Pakistan's real enemy, India. At the same time, India is exacting a price from the United States for its support of the war against terror—it too is demanding weapons.

Shifting coalitions, buying and selling weapons, bribes, and alliances of convenience (after all, Stalin was our World War II ally)—this is the history of diplomacy. The current alliance building, including "rewarding" India's and Pakistan's support, is part of that story. But why prosecute this war by providing the means for the next? Why not provide debt forgiveness or funds to both India and Pakistan for education, health care, and development? And what about our militarization of Uzbekistan, ruled by a dictator with his own brand of Islam? Are we laying there the ground for future violence mirroring our ill-fated use of Pakistan

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two decades ago? Will we leave the region in the same economic and social disarray as we did Central America, which, with Afghanistan, was on the front lines in the war against communism during the eighties?

The sole superpower cannot expect to enlist the world in its battles and then abandon its allies and victims when it is finished. Just wars, which this may well be, must be followed by a just peace and by restitution. The United States has a responsibility for the conditions created and exacerbated in the pursuit of victory in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We should not make the future worse by supplying weapons to nations all too well supplied. And finally, matters that now appear less pressing than the pursuit of terrorists—for example, the AIDS epidemic in Africa, global warming, and the status of undocumented Mexican workers—cannot be casually set aside.

Americans have been dismayed by the animosity shown us since September 11 in other parts of the world. We should be less worried about why we are disliked and more discerning about why we are not trusted.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

E.J. DIONNE Jr.

ROCKAWAY, QUEENS

A neighborhood I know well

Our family has a love affair with a star-crossed little neighborhood at the edge of New York City. In our house, "Rockaway" is a magic word. Going to Rockaway means seeing grandma and aunts and uncles and "the cousins." A passel of kids of varying ages, the cousins love playing baseball in the front yard, romping on the beach just two blocks away, or exploring what's left of the Fort Tilden gun emplacements that overlook the Atlantic Ocean. The guns were put there to fight Nazis who many feared would come across the sea during World War II. Fortunately, the Nazis never came. Now, the neighborhood faces troubles no one ever imagined.

The television screen on the morning of November 12 cut suddenly to a city block we know and cherish. The flames were ripping through houses and buildings two doors down from my brother-in-law's home. We knew my mother-in-law was in church at the time of the crash—she goes to the 9 A.M. Mass every day at Saint Francis de Sales, about a block from where some of the plane fragments hit. We learned courtesy of a live interview with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani that the church was OK. Grandma finally got through to us. She and the rest of the family were OK, too.

Mayor Giuliani said he remembered the church because of the many funerals and memorial services he had attended there since September 11. You see, Rockaway, and in particular the Belle Harbor section that was struck on November 12, had already suffered mightily in the World Trade Center disaster. It's a neighborhood full of firefighters and upwardly mobile, middle-class people, many of whom had moved across the Gil Hodges Bridge from working-class sections of Brooklyn. Many of them found good jobs in the financial boom of the 1990s and worked in the Trade Center.

To call this neighborhood old-fashioned is both true and misleading. True because the prevailing values really are old-fashioned. Misleading because everyone is acutely aware that it takes hard work and careful adjustment to keep old values alive in the year 2001.

People in Belle Harbor don't much debate a word like "communitarian." They don't have to. That's just what these people are. I know from family experience that when a neighbor gets sick, whole blocks mobilize instantly. Food just shows up. Babysitters suddenly materialize. The invitation for a drink at the Harbor Light, a friendly establishment smack in the path of November 12's devastation, comes right on time. The word gets out fast. Nobody ever asks questions. Nobody thinks about being paid back. Everybody knows the same comfort will be available for them when they need it.

Firefighters are as thick on the ground as steelworkers once were in Pittsburgh or stockbrokers still are in Brooklyn Heights. It's work that's often passed down from father to son. Few professions fit the neighborhood better: a marriage of family values with public service. Their attitude fits too—tough on the outside, romantic on the inside.

The funny thing about this neighborhood is that for all the ties of clan and ethnicity and faith—most of the neighbors we know are Irish, with a sprinkling of Italians, and Catholic—there is a kind of open welcome you don't run into everywhere. Many people who don't know the place think this is an attitude foreign to New York City. It isn't. My son loves the neighborhood because he can hit the streets and within five minutes be brought into a game of basketball or beach baseball or whatever else is going on. He's not an outsider. He's a kid; he's Brian's cousin; he's an honorary neighbor.

That's why it was so painful to watch this neighborhood in flames. Why so much trouble has come so fast to one small place I cannot explain. All I know is that it's a place that knows how to pull together and get dinner to the household down the street where no one is home to cook. Maybe it goes through hard times because it is so naturally gifted at dealing with them.

A few weeks back, I was talking with Monsignor Martin Geraghty, the pastor of Saint Francis de Sales, about his neighborhood's troubles. He's a deeply thoughtful man, a neighborhood intel-

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lectual who never flaunts how smart he is. He spoke of the academic trend to deconstruct, and thus explain awy, anything. "You can deconstruct everything," he said, "except suffering." I don't envy Monsignor Geraghty's task of explaining to the good people of this exceptional neighborhood why the inexplicable keeps happening to them. □

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OF SEVERAL MINDS

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

GETTING IT RIGHT

The ethics of journalism

Anthrax in the newsroom arouses journalists' attention. If death concentrates the mind, then terrorist attacks can bring to awareness the importance of journalism's obligations as a profession. Yes, a commitment to seek the truth and accurately inform the community can be dangerous. Courageous journalists have been assassinated (in Ireland and elsewhere) and repressive regimes regularly punish and imprison troublesome reporters (Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola most recently). Dictators and oligarchs don't take kindly to freedom of the press.

Other dangers can imperil journalism in rich democratic societies like the United States. Megamedia corporations bent on making profits distort the role of the press. "Commercialized speech" and the growth of "infotainment" contribute to a society amusing itself to death. Observers have bemoaned the decrease of serious, accurate news coverage, without which civil deliberation declines.

Citizens need in-depth reporting to participate in a democracy and to make wise decisions. Profit-centered journalism treats readers and viewers as private consumers. A journalism of assertion and celebrity opinion may give customers what they want and so drive up market share while driving out serious news programs.

Other subtle obstacles are built into the nature of journalism. The competitive drive for artistic creative expression that grips and holds attention can get out of hand. Journalists are partly artists and partly skeptical scientists who must avoid bias and errors through conscientious cross-checking and verification of information. Tabloids tend to indulge in hype, rumor, innuendo, and other entertaining gossip. TV shows also falsify truth when they set up debates between protagonists representing extreme positions. Enhancing the dramatic value of a show does a disservice to the fact that most issues are not black or white but require patience and perseverance to address.

Highly professional journalists may find it easy not to misrepresent facts, lie, libel, slander, or indulge in conscious bias. But other temptations await. A creative journalist may begin to focus on his or her own reactive sensibilities to events rather than on the news. Artists make up narratives and scenarios in order to convey "higher truths," but journalists cannot succumb to the lure of fictive embellishments.

The competitive urge to get the story first (as in cutting-edge scientific research) tempts journalists to trim ethical corners. And since error is inevitable, journalism must be ready to revise and to correct.

Another siren call in highbrow journalism invites settling down comfortably in the country's elite establishments. But how can journalists fulfill their watchdog function when they have become insiders and joined the powerful folk they are reporting on? It's difficult to be a voice for those without a voice if you move only among the well-endowed, articulate classes. Many smart, gifted journalists come from the same Ivy yards as the leaders of society. Old-boy and old-girl networks produce bias from the blinders that come with privilege. In America, educated talented people go in and out the window between journalism, government, and the foundations. It takes courage to take an outsider's viewpoint and to criticize your once-and-future colleagues—even if you retain the ability to notice problems in the status quo.

Secular liberal elites have been in the saddle so long that they don't understand "the others." Religious believers, for example, especially the orthodox faithful, are thought of as odd. Ethnic groups in which traditional bonds of kinship and attachment trump individual autonomy also appear alien to mobile, modern types schooled in rational self-interest and cost-benefit analysis. Elite journalists can miss the news beneath their noses. Only now are we hearing about the power of religious motivation—as part of the national catch-up course offered on Islam.

Are there other lacunae out there waiting to be discovered? Yes, in an increasingly globalized world, U.S. journalism will have to do a better job reporting on international science, technology, market forces, and ecological crises. The advent of bioterrorism points up how little attention Americans have paid to plagues, pandemics, and the toxic pollutions of poverty in the third world. An isolationist stance in fortress America can no longer play in Peoria.

Perhaps the maturing of American journalism has been jump-started with the September 11 disaster. Journalism has responded well to the tragedy. The public has been given the truth in a responsible way. Rumors have been labeled, and compassion and competence have been displayed. Pictures of people plunging from the towers or of burned bloody body parts were generally not depicted—for both moral and aesthetic reasons.

Perhaps some survivors and mourning relatives have been somewhat exploited. In response, guidelines for interviewing trauma victims without inflicting more harm have been devised by journalists and psychologists working together: get informed consent, try

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to provide privacy, treat victims with dignity and not as fodder for a story.

Now, tough ethical calls await journalism's coverage of the new "war." Here again the public's need to know may be in conflict with government interests. As with all moral decisions, no simple-minded formulas resolve moral dilemmas. In serious journalism, moral discernment and courageous prudence will have to be the ultimate "reliable source" for the story. □

Julia Vitullo-Martin

FIREFIGHTERS & COPS

What provoked the scuffle?

New York writer Kitty Barnes used to say that you had to pass a "handsome test" to become a New York City firefighter. Firefighters have always had a glamour edge over other city workers. The many black-and-white photographs of firefighters since September 11 have the feel of Armani ads—great-looking men, covered in soot and sweat, doing their arduous work with the nonchalant grace of natural athletes.

But 250 of them still lie beneath the rubble of the World Trade Center. The sadness of the Bravest seems nearly unendurable. So when New York firefighters attacked New York cops at Ground Zero on November 2, injuring five of them, their assault was covered by newspapers and television around the world—but with restraint. The media chose to be subdued about what, at any other time, would have been a sensational front-page tabloid story.

What's going on?

Firefighters had mounted a peaceful midmorning march to protest City Hall's decision to reduce the fire, police, and emergency crew members who spot human remains in the debris. When the spotters identify remains, construction crews halt their work and recovery teams come in. Firefighters drape the remains in mourning and pray before carrying them out. Some of the men have beautiful voices and sing the ancient chants—I heard one softly singing the *Dies irae*.

Debris with no known remains is shipped off to the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, where the Medical Examiner makes a second effort to identify any body parts. You can see the problem immediately: Remains that are not recognized by the spotters are dumped on one of the most infamous garbage heaps in the world—no mourning, no prayers, no Mass. Just "carted off on a garbage scow," as the father of a missing firefighter wrote recently in the *New York Daily News*. The drive of firefighters to keep this from happening to the bodies of their brothers is unrelenting. The fire union called the site "sacred ground." And of course it is—New York's own Gettysburg.

Fires rage beneath the surface, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani called the site unstable and dangerous. It is now being cleared by crews using heavy cranes, clamshells, and backhoes. The two-hundred-plus firefighters on the site were in harm's way—and impeding the cleanup. Giuliani is almost surely right, but emotions are raw. Thomas Lynch, a poet and undertaker who runs a funeral home in Michigan, says that "Mourning is romance in reverse. If you love, you grieve. There are no exceptions. There are only those who do it well and those who don't." Firefighters have always done it well.

Resolute in honoring their dead, firefighters chanted "Bring our brothers home," before breaking through police barriers and punching several cops on November 2. Reinforcements were called in, and mounted police and cops in riot gear appeared. The photos were shocking. Everyone was stunned, including Giuliani whose romantic attachment to firefighters had long predated September 11. He stayed patient for several days. But when firefighters derided his efforts to clean up the site as "scoop and dump," he angrily called them "sinful." To be sure there was no misunderstanding he added, "And I mean that in a moral sense."

This is in many ways a peculiarly Catholic dispute. The fire department is overwhelmingly Catholic, as is the mayor and the City Hall contingent close to him. Rites matter to these men. New York's Catholic churches, including Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, have been ceaselessly busy with funerals.

Bringing his sense of ritual to the public square, the mayor organized an October 28 memorial service in which family members of those killed in the attack were given polished cherry mahogany urns containing soil and ash from the site. The *New York Times* reports that the urns were "respectfully assembled by the police ceremonial unit." Police officers in full dress uniform wearing white gloves had solemnly and silently filled the four thousand urns as if each urn were the only one.

But firefighters saw this memorial service as a pretext for converting the public understanding of Ground Zero from a burial site to a construction site. They have a point. But City Hall also has a point. The site is dangerous and must be cleared.

The complex question of the war dead—and we are now at war—is not easily resolved, if it ever is. The remains of soldiers from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam are still being identified and returned. It is generally acknowledged, even by the firefighters, that the bodies of most of those lost were cremated in the extreme and lasting fires at the site. *Dies irae* is fitting. □

Julia Vitullo-Martin *is a New York-based writer who contributes regularly to* Commonweal.

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YOUNG AMERICAN CATHOLICS

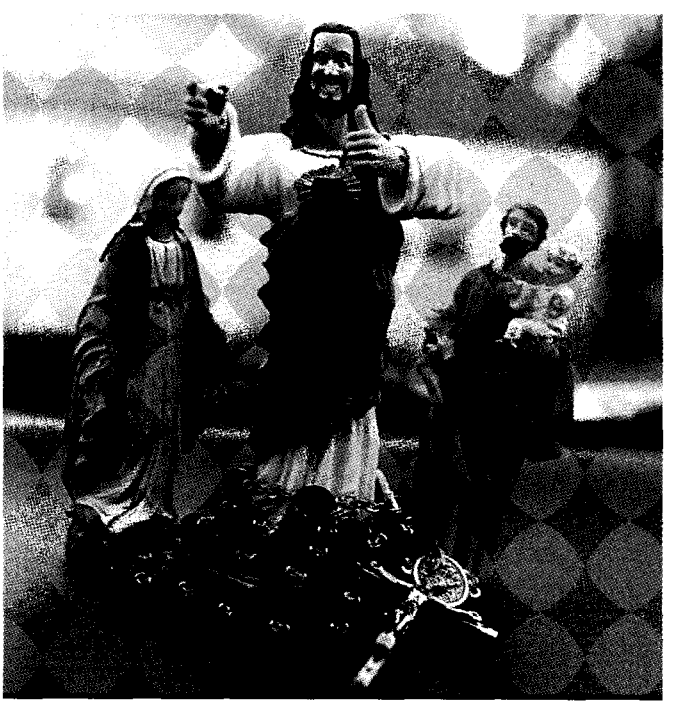
Who are they & what do they want?

James T. Fisher

"I do want my life to be a committed one," wrote Daniel Callahan in his introduction to *Generation of the Third Eye*, a collection of autobiographical essays by "younger" Catholic intellectuals published in 1965, as Vatican II drew to a close. For Callahan, authentic commitment entailed dedication to "the church, to my work in the church, to the world which Christ came to redeem." At the same time he identified himself as a member of "a generation which, cut loose from many of its roots, from the nurture of old traditions, looks constantly into itself." The central motif of *Generation of the Third Eye* was the "Journey toward Maturity" (as Francis E. Kearns's essay was titled), part of which—to judge from many of the introductory blurbs—involved the progression from Catholic college to secular graduate education. The truly mature Catholic now sought to reconcile the claims of authority and tradition with a newfound freedom that only the irresponsible would evade. Young people were being asked to revive the church. For these "new Catholics" the church itself would become the arena in which generational drama was played out, and it seemed for the first time that the whole world was watching.

American Catholic history since 1965 could be read largely as a convoluted sequel to *Generation of the Third Eye*, but the narrative seems to have finally exhausted itself in efforts to make sense of the experience of today's "young adult Catholics." Everyone acknowledges that this cohort is "different" from the Vatican II generation, but it is much harder to discern the ways in which the very questions posed to these young people reflect enduring notions grounded in the experiences of older Catholics. There has been a fair amount of published speculation and empirical research devoted to unraveling the mysteries of Catholics born and raised in the postconciliar era. *Young Adult Catholics* (University of Notre Dame Press; see page 15), a newly published quantitative study by four sociologists (Dean R. Hoge, William D. Dinges, Sister Mary Johnson, and Juan L. Gonzales Jr.) confirms earlier findings that the vast majority of these young adults sustain some version of a Catholic identity (nearly 90 percent of their sample). Yet only 10 percent of respondents fit the authors' criteria for identity as "core" Catholics: those who "take seriously the teachings of the pope (even where they may disagree with particulars), view Catholicism as the one true church (while acknowledging the truths of other traditions), pray daily, and reject the idea that one can be a 'good Catholic' without going to Mass."

There is also an explicitly comparative perspective underlying the authors' understanding of young adult "core" Catholics. "Our interviews," they explain, "taught us that many young adults today have not learned to distinguish between core and periphery, even though the generations growing up in the 1960s and 1970s knew how to do it and felt free to do so." In other words, "the earlier generation found a way to dissent and stay. But the young today are not clear about how to think about essentials and nonessentials." So the mere fact that young adults do not "leave" the church in larger numbers is not as comforting news as it might seem. *Young Adult Catholics* features many of the virtues of good social science and will provide material for many fruitful discussions, but in some ways it has already become part of the same intergenerational riddle that it seeks to resolve. Quantitative studies are unable to tell us what such notions as "authority" and "identity" mean to young people and how they work in the construction of religious imagination.



'Hey there, good buddy.'

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In the 1960s and 1970s, younger "core" Catholics worked out a kind of liberal consensus in public that enabled individuals to speak authoritatively for an entire generation. They combated racism and offered witness against the war in Vietnam, both of which constituted decisive breaks with the dominant sensibility of the preconciliar American church. There were debates, of course, but there was also a sense that what they said and wrote really mattered to the church, and they were right. A 1975 essay by Anthony Padovano, for example (in *Journeys* [Paulist Press], a collection edited by Gregory Baum), neatly captured the theological spirit of "younger Catholics" of all ages. "Without inner freedom," wrote Padovano, "life is logical rather than metaphysical, theology becomes a system rather than a symbol, Christianity is reduced from experience to ideology." The "new Catholic" was a kind of committed existentialist. A decade after *Generation of the Third Eye*, a passage in an autobiographical essay could still capture the tone of a generation's concerns without having to try too hard. The liberal consensus soon evaporated, however; the ascendance of neoconservatism was greatly abetted by such prominent erstwhile "new Catholics" as the theologian/writer Michael Novak and others who shifted the locus of true freedom from the self to the marketplace.

"Young adult Catholics" have rarely claimed to speak for an entire generation since those heady days now more than a quarter century removed. When a group of younger scholars in the 1980s and early 1990s began to reexamine the richly devotional life of the preconciliar church, the negative response of many older Catholic liberals to this project suggested that they virtually identified "young Catholic" with church reformer. They appeared resistant to entertaining alternative models of Catholic identity, though few if any of the younger scholars were intent on actually reviving devotionalism. They recovered the meaning of these ancient practices with a certain detachment and sense of irony that was a hallmark of the late baby boom "lost generation" of Catholics. With the emergence of "Generation X" in the 1990s, young people once again assumed the responsibility of exemplifying their cohort's unique travail. Part of the appeal of Tom Beaudoin's remarkably confident voicing of GenX's spiritual journey in *Virtual Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 1998), lies in its usefulness as a guide to vexed and/or perplexed older readers. Beaudoin patiently details the central role that popular culture played in the religious lives of Americans born in the late 1960s. Beaudoin calls pop culture a "form of 'surrogate clergy'" that bound together a generation determined to take religion into its own hands rather than have it imposed from above. Significantly, *Virtual Faith* is not a strictly "Catholic" book: By the late 1990s, an honest accounting of the spirituality of one who happened to be a Catholic in the culture was bound to resonate with an ecumenical audience.

We often hear that young adult Catholics are theologically illiterate but it is rarely asked: Compared to whom?

My own somewhat limited experience with "young adult Catholics" has convinced me that we are already well into a new dispensation beyond Generation X. Young Catholics between the ages of, say, eighteen and their late twenties cannot be readily lumped into a single category: They are indeed marked by a resistance to any generational schemes imposed on them by oldsters. I began teaching at Saint Louis University, a large Jesuit institution, in 1994 (just a few months after the death of Kurt Cobain, lead singer of the rock band Nirvana and a "grunge" icon who may go down in history as the first and last martyr of Generation X). My students were a bit too homogeneous as Midwesterners to make up a truly representative sample, but taken as a whole the Catholics among them seemed to reflect the attitudes and behaviors ascribed to a slightly older cohort by the authors of *Young Adult Catholics*. They clearly embraced the centrality of the sacraments to their faith and regarded service to the disadvantaged as a key component of Catholic practice. They attended Mass and participated in small faith communities more often than most of the respondents in *Young Adult Catholics*, but their location at a Catholic university known for the excellent quality of campus liturgies helps account for their difference from members of a broader sample.

The attitude of these young people toward issues of authority and identity truly distinguishes them from older Catholics, but we cannot understand how that difference works until and unless we ask how they understand the terms themselves. Young Catholics convey a belief that authority generates its own validity and does not simply proceed from the claims of "tradition." They know that knowledge is power and that once unleashed its trajectory cannot be reversed. The future of stem-cell research on discarded embryos, for example, is for them a given, unaffected by appeals to natural law: The real issues entail allocation of resources and control of the means of reproduction. The ethical implications of this and related developments must be demonstrated to these young people with the clarity associated with the scientific method.

My impression is that young Catholics, like other young Americans, do not "question authority" in general but examine its claims case by case. They will invest in sources of credible authority, regardless of age, more readily than did young people over the four previous decades. They apply the same conviction to matters of authority within the church. Many young adult Catholics hold Pope John Paul II in great esteem, not because he is the pope but because he is a pope who says and does things that resonate deeply with their own concerns. When the pope visited Saint Louis in January 1999, the expected throng of onlookers along his motorcade route did not materialize; but a youth rally during his visit, held at the Kiel Center downtown, became the site of an extraordinary spiritual revival meeting. Many young

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people in attendance later testified to a life-changing experience that night. They responded deeply and immediately to the pope's simple message. "Do not listen to those who encourage you to lie, to shirk responsibility, to put yourself first," the pontiff urged the crowd of more than twenty thousand. The pope's influence on young Catholics was scarcely apparent during his early visits to the United States but became dramatically evident during World Youth Day in Denver in August 1993. The pope's appeal cannot be manufactured or manipulated but is grounded in the sense of authenticity he conveys. It also seems to separate young Catholics—to some extent at least—from those among their elders who view the pontiff with ambivalence.

The pope's appeal to the young is discomfiting to many older Catholic liberals, but some of the same students in attendance at the Saint Louis youth rally traveled later that year to Fort Benning, Georgia, to offer witness against the United States Army's School of the Americas. El Salvadoran counterinsurgency forces, trained at the SOA in assassination techniques, were implicated in the murders of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 and six Jesuits in 1989. At Saint Louis University, as at many other Jesuit schools, the annual visit to Fort Benning is carefully organized through the office of campus ministry, hardly the model for protest familiar to an older generation. Yet when I asked a first-year student who had just returned from the trip last autumn to describe the experience in class, both the depth of her commitment and her balanced understanding of the issues were undeniable. She had "observed, judged, and acted," the formula once exalted by Young Christian Students and other long-forgotten outposts of the lay apostolate. Students embraced the "mission" of the trip only after discerning its legitimacy on their own; at other times they have expressed deep skepticism for policies crafted by some of the same administrators who accompanied them to Georgia. This is a wary and most watchful crew of young people.

The fluidity and versatility of these young Catholics are striking. They traverse boundaries between traditions and denominations with an ease that can be startling to those raised in an era when the borders of spiritual real estate were neatly demarcated. Young adult Catholics partake of the identity politics that dominated the culture of their school years. There are, for example, gay, lesbian, and transgendered people who craft their own Catholic identities, a process familiar to many others who blend multiple elements, including religious loyalty, into an integrated whole. Then there are young Catholics who pray and act much like evangelical Protestants. Anyone who has taught religion at a Catholic college will nod in recognition at the findings reported in *Young Adult Catholics*: Many of these young people have a hard time identifying the differences between their own tradition and those of their friends and neighbors who worship down the block. None

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

RESIDENCE HALL RECTOR

The University of Notre Dame is a Catholic university founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross. Approximately 6,500 of the 8,000 undergraduates live in 27 single-sex residence halls on campus.

Within its undergraduate residence halls, the University strives to create communities of faith and learning that serve as catalysts for the integration of students' intellectual, spiritual, and social development. The Rector is the principal person in charge of an undergraduate residence hall. Living accommodations are designed for one person. This position is held by priests, male and female religious, and lay people.

Together with a graduate student Assistant Rector and undergraduate Seniors serving as Resident Assistants, the Rector educates, counsels and consoles, accompanies students in the life of faith, and calls students to accountability in accordance with University behavioral expectations. The Rector also acts as liaison to other University Departments responsible for student welfare and the physical condition of the residence hall.

The University currently has positions open for Rectors in men's and women's residence halls. A master's degree is preferred. The position of Rector is a full-time, live-in position, although some Rectors hold part-time teaching positions or part-time administrative assignments.

Starting salary for this nine-month position in 2001-2002 was $29,174, plus benefits, a retirement plan, furnished living quarters, and a meal plan.

For further information and application materials, visit our website at
http://www.nd.edu/~stdntaff/Hallstaff.htm

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of this is news, but until we devise a means to understand just how this new model of fluid Catholic identity works in the "Culture of Choice" (the subtitle of *Young Adult Catholics*) we cannot really predict whether these people will indeed become the "core Catholics" of the future.

We often hear that young adult Catholics are theologically illiterate but it is rarely asked: Compared to whom? We have surely seen a democratization of theological education in the past four decades that should be viewed as one of the great triumphs of the postconciliar era. Advocates of greater freedom within the church found themselves caught up in the same dilemma that faced the American revolutionaries of the 1780s: it was a question not simply of home rule but who should rule at home. Theological sources whose access was once limited to an elite few are now readily available to anyone with a library card or a modem. Sure, there are issues of quality control and accuracy to consider, but would anyone really prefer to return to the era when religion was taught as rote catechism to dozing collegians? Students in Catholic colleges today are routinely exposed to such racy course topics as the New Testament, the sacraments, American Christianity, and even an occasional theology of marriage class. It may not be a golden age for the profession of theology, but never have so many young Catholics been introduced to such a diverse body of materials rooted in our common faith.

As the self-appointed ambassador of the young to middle-aged Catholics, filmmaker Kevin Smith (thirty-one) gave his detailed theological "reading" of the classic film *A Man for All Seasons* in the July 20 issue of the *New York Times*. (I had touted Smith's 1995 film, *Clerks*, as the work of an unmistakably Catholic imagination [*Commonweal*, September 22, 1995].) In the old days, people who called themselves devout Catholics, as Kevin Smith does, did not make films featuring the salty language and gross-out situations found in the likes of *Chasing Amy* and *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*. Nor did they openly discuss their religious convictions with the unembarrassed intensity exhibited by Smith in the *Times* story. In contrasting Thomas More's martyrdom with that of the Puritan-accused witch John Proctor in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Smith explained that More "lays down his life for his soul. It's not about his identity; it's about his soul." In a further exercise in boundary-laying, Smith expressed doubts that nonbelievers can truly appreciate the grandeur of *A Man for All Seasons*. "It's such an inaccessible movie, in one sense, for people who don't believe in God."

Like many Catholics of his generation, Kevin Smith's formal Catholic education may have been deficient in certain respects (George Carlin's turn as a bishop touting the "Buddy Christ" [see cover] in *Dogma* was among the truly funny bits in the movie; it may also represent the filmmaker's partial payback for the shortcomings of 1970s-style catechetics). I am not suggesting that all thirty-year-old Catholics share Smith's vocabulary, or his imagination. I am saying that younger Catholics continue to pack their faith on journeys to uncharted cultural and spiritual territories, and that we might wait before reading them out of the congregation. It would be great of course if Kevin Smith would make a film of Flannery O'Connor's "The Displaced Person" or a comparable grown-up work in the great American Catholic tradition, but I'm not holding my breath. A great deal has been lost or squandered in recent decades, but that does not mean the riches may not yet be recovered. As a historian with an interest in the work of labor priests, I was particularly dismayed to learn from *Young Adult Catholics* that only 14 percent of respondents believed that the "church's traditional support of the right of workers to unionize" was an "essential" element of their faith, despite the clear teaching of the social encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). There is much teaching yet to be done. As Paul Elie suggested a decade ago in *Commonweal* ("The Everlasting Dilemma," September 27, 1991), we might consider renouncing the distinctions between generations "as limiting and divisive, choosing instead to emphasize what we share—our common faith and our long and complex tradition and our contemporary American situation and our bonds to one another." In the meantime, support your local American Catholic Studies program.

There is at least one more fascinating piece to this intergenerational puzzle. The more we hear that young adult Catholics are different from their elders in the church, the more we discover just how much they are like other Americans of all ages. "In an age of moral freedom," social commentator Alan Wolfe writes in *Moral Freedom* (W.W. Norton, 2001), "moral authority has to justify its claims." In interviews with Americans from a wide variety of backgrounds, Wolfe uncovered a deep distrust of traditional institutions and disappointment with the conduct of political and religious leaders. Meanwhile the quest for personal character and integrity remains a powerful theme in the lives of individuals. Some of Wolfe's most telling anecdotes are drawn from the testimonies of Catholics of varying degrees of affiliation with the church. They do sound much like other Americans, but this does not necessarily mean that their faith has been diluted or that the church will inevitably go the way of declining mainline Protestant denominations. It may just as readily be argued that the experience of young adult Catholics places them at the nation's moral epicenter, endowing them with a great opportunity to influence public discourse for the good of all.

In 1965 Daniel Callahan wrote that his generation "looks constantly into itself, and is thus partially paralyzed." In 2001 Alan Wolfe writes in *Moral Freedom* that "when a moral decision has to be made" Americans "look into themselves—at their own interests, desires, needs, sensibilities, identities, and inclinations—before they choose the right course of action." Young Catholics have evidently been prepared by their experience to handle this version of moral freedom, but they also inherit a tradition that offers another model of freedom. Here's to a meaningful adventure. □

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"What do you have to say for yourselves?"

Essentially, that's the question we posed to three living, breathing, young Catholic writers. Along with that, we asked them to respond to the typical set of questions posed to them by "older" Catholics concerning their place in the church: Are you really theologically illiterate? Disconnected from the institutional church but spiritually hungry? Devotees of the pope? Baffled by the church's teachings on sexuality? Fundamentally no different from previous generations?

For their answers to these questions and others, read on.

THE EDITORS

Natalia Imperatori-Lee

It's a scary time to be young, but to be Catholic, too? For my generation, the intersection of these two realities means living with a high degree of ambiguity and dissonance. We are the product of the post-Vatican II church. Judging the success of the council by its fruits in this generation, I have to ask if the church that produced Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, and Vatican II wasn't a better church than the one in which younger Catholics have grown up.

We are also products of the Internet: pervasive reachability, instant communication. This has spoiled us. We want the answers now. We want clarity now—the kind that the post-Vatican II church doesn't provide. What many of us are too slowly coming to realize is that no church, not even the one before Vatican II, could ever provide the kind of blueprint for religiosity that we long for. The "manual" theology, the neatly ordered morality of the past, is a pill we can't swallow—we are too savvy, too technologically proficient. We practice safe sex, not free love, but not chastity either.

This is an informed, information-driven generation. We know so much, we long for that which we *don't* know—hence the desire for "mystery" among many young, conservative, restorationist Catholics who hunger for a past idyllic church. But once the novelty fades, will the Tridentine Mass evoke mystery, or simply more boredom? Since we don't know any other liturgy than the reformed one, since we're unclear on the past, and under-involved with the present reality of the parish, we often mistake non-sense for mystery.

Perhaps Vatican II doesn't "work" for this generation because it requires commitment that's different from the neoconservative and neodevotional. It requires intellectual commitment. Not assent, but a genuine commitment to intellectual inquiry that involves risk—deep as well as horizon-broadening risk. This kind of risk-taking produced Vatican II and its implementation by pastors and educators—the kind of risk-taking that remaining a catholic Catholic entails. I'm not sure that my generation of Catholics is up to the challenge.

There are moments when I feel that I was born at the wrong time. I belong with the generation at the first Call to Action meeting (1976). I should have studied at the Gregorian (as a woman? Maybe not). I should have been in Rome during the council. I should have been around then, to see that the church is capable of miraculous self-renewal. What happened to the days of *aggiornamento*—the openness of the church toward the world heralded by John XXIII and so characteristic of the council? No one's throwing open any windows anymore—we're closing them up and winterizing. Are we keeping the world out, or sealing the truth in?

There remains a kind of openness appropriate for "emerging" adults. It's a difficult kind, because it requires openness to ambiguity. We need to admit that there are no easy answers. Ambiguity surrounds us, and there is no hermeneutic, no way of understanding the whole, certainly not after September 11. The hermeneutic of suspicion seems to have worn itself out—our generation is tired of suspicion, and wants what's on the other side. But what does that look like? No one said this postmodernity thing would be easy.

Maybe every generation of Catholics goes through this. I wonder what kind of Catholics my daughters will be. Will they do laundry for priests, or be priests themselves?

Natalia Imperatori-Lee *is pursuing a Ph.D. in theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

Jeremy Langford

Those of us in our twenties and thirties have grown weary of being called "Generation X" and stereotyped as superficial, self-centered whiners. While it is true that we were reared in the aftermath of the forces that shaped previous generations—the Great Depression, World War II, Vietnam, the turbulent 1960s, the Kennedy and King assassinations, and Watergate—we have faced battles that in some ways hit closer to home. Growing up in the sixties through the eighties, we saw unprecedented changes in the familial, political, social, and economic structures that, for the first time in U.S. history, made it likely that society's young members might not be better off than their parents. While nearly half of us experienced the divorce of our parents—making us what I call "Generation eX"—we also experienced divorce between ourselves and our world. As child abductions, nuclear threat, drug and alcohol use, teenage sex and pregnancies, anorexia, AIDS, cynicism, and suicide increased, budgets were being cut and schools were falling apart. All the while the cost of college was soaring, the job market was shrinking, the cost of homes was rising, and the institutions of health care and Social Security stood on increasingly shaky ground.

Today we are faced with making sense of both the world in which we were reared and the one we are already or will soon be leading. Through my work in Catholic publishing and young adult ministry, I have come to see the very real hungers that drive my peers and me, as well as the nour-

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ishment that Scripture and tradition can provide. The insights of the bishops in "Sons and Daughters of the Light" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Laity) have proved most helpful. Rather than assume anything about young people, the committee followed Jesus' lead by asking them "What do you seek?" and then boiled their responses down to four key hungers: healthy personal identity (Who am I?), intimacy in relationships (Who am I in relation to others?), meaningful work (Where am I going?), and life-giving spirituality (How do I get there?).

When it comes to how the church can feed these hungers, the challenges are clear. Those of us raised Catholic often do not have a coherent sense of what being Catholic means or how much Catholic life changed after Vatican II. We wonder whether participating in parish life and weekly Mass is essential to faith and spirituality. And we are often uncomfortable naming key experiences in our lives as "God moments."

But the good news—especially in light of 9/11—is that we are willing to seek, to ask questions, to see with new eyes, and to serve a world in need. Tired of empty promises, pervasive bad news, and partisan and special-interest politics that lead nowhere, we are open to authentic wisdom and witness of what it means to be fully alive. For me, and for many young adults, the Catholic Church is such a witness when it doesn't offer rigid answers but embraces and provokes profound questions. When it doesn't assess sin, blame, and punishment but calls for integration, reconciliation, and accountability. When it doesn't exclude and divide but includes and unites. When it fights not for a fragile future as an institution but fights to be the body of Christ on earth, made up of seekers who long to see through the eyes of joy and to serve with passionate love.

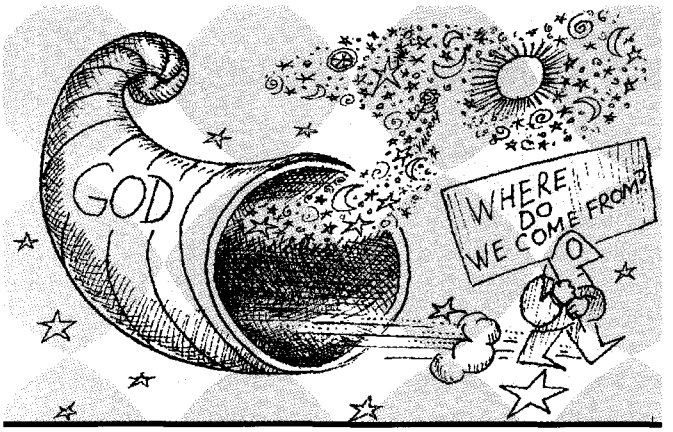
Jeremy Langford, *co-publisher and editor-in-chief of Sheed & Ward, is the author of* God Moments: Why Faith Really Matters to a New Generation (*Orbis*).

Eileen Markey

The question for younger Catholics is not, Why do we leave the church? There are plenty of obvious reasons: patriarchy, a secular world, lack of faith, poor liturgies, homophobia. The more interesting question is, Why do we stay? I would not belong to any other organization whose practices I disagree with so much.

There are three or four reasons why we continue to call ourselves Catholic, even as we disagree with Vatican teachings on women priests, on birth control, on dissent, on homosexuality. We stay because we were raised with a high level of practice and taught the rough rudiments of theology at Catholic schools and universities. We feel a sense of ownership for the church. This is my church, and reactionary Vatican pronouncements aren't going to get me to leave.

For many of my peers, being Catholic means being in struggle. Not only the classic struggle to know and serve



God. The struggle is a fight to reform this church of ours. If we leave, we accept defeat. We stay because in remaining we add a drop of liberal thought into this sea of conservative practices.

We stay out of loyalty to a vision of what the church could be. Should be. We stay also because we are educated enough to understand that we are the church. We are able to discern which teachings are central. We are not supposed to pick and choose what we believe, but we know it is more essential to believe in the Incarnation than to believe that only men can be priests. So we stay.

But we also can't leave.

Even if we don't go to Mass every week, our worldview, our approach to politics, to work, to relationships, moves within a Catholic framework. It is part of our identity, from plaid jumpers in childhood, to respect for celibate, learned men, to a take on fighting poverty that is not charity but justice for fellow humans.

Many of us stay in the church because we appreciate its countercultural stance. We stay for the radical message of love and forgiveness and community. The essential teachings of the church stand in stark contrast to a cynical, consumer culture. The countercultural stances of other groups and institutions get sucked up into marketing every few months, but the church remains separate from all that. Like Catholics of any generation, we like the story. And we like the idea of something that can't be sold.

Over the course of two thousand years, Mary has become a virgin and professors have had to sign loyalty oaths, but the story hasn't changed. And the story of Christ and his church still resonates.

But finally, what keeps us Catholic is what makes us Catholic: the Eucharist. For all its religious, political, and personal meanings, the Eucharist is why I'll never leave my flawed church.

The young Catholics still here stay because we assent to the community consuming God together, to the message that we are all connected, to the idea that the divine is present in all of us, and to the belief that this assent nourishes us. □

Eileen Markey *is an American journalist living in London.*

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The next generation: a diagnosis

Peter Steinfels

"In the not too distant past, the backbone of Catholic Church life, from parishes and organizations to ordained and professed religious, was people twenty-five to forty-five years old. On most levels of the church today, the leadership is still held by that same group—not the same age group, but the same people now twenty to thirty years older."

John C. Cusick and Katherine F. DeVries, Chicago Young Adult Ministry Office

In 1994, three sociologists published one of the best—because one of the most rigorous—studies of generational change in American religion. Called *Vanishing Boundaries* (Westminster John Knox Press), the book tracked down a representative sample of baby boomers who had been confirmed as mainline Presbyterians, and it traced their consequent religious histories: Who had left and for how long? Who had returned to Presbyterian congregations? Who had gone elsewhere and why? Who believed what?

The study was set firmly in the context of the prolonged debate over the decline of mainline American Protestantism. The Presbyterian problem—and by extension the mainline Protestant problem—was not, the study showed, driving adult members out of church but failing to bring their sons and daughters in. Retention, in other words, not rejection. Church and family had simply not answered the question, why be a Presbyterian? Or even why be a Christian? On the contrary, the young Presbyterians had imbibed the notion that strong claims in support of distinctive religious beliefs and practices were irrelevant if not even intolerant. Hence the title: *Vanishing Boundaries*. Indeed, among those who did stay Presbyterian as well as those who did not, many had reduced their faith to a kind of generic being good to family and friends without insisting on strong convictions or obligatory practices. The authors called this stance "lay liberalism." Nancy Ammerman, another sociologist of religion, has more recently called it "Golden Rule Christianity." However labeled, the impression is that it lacks the capacity to energize congregational life, sustain social or political engagement, or pass the faith on to children.

In 1992, I wrote a report for the *New York Times* on the preliminary findings that later became *Vanishing Boundaries*. In a phone interview, I asked one of the authors, Dean R. Hoge, a Presbyterian himself but long a professor at The Catholic University of America and a prolific researcher of Catholic matters, whether he thought these discouraging findings would apply to the coming generation of Roman Catholics as well. His answer: yes. At least yes for the post-immigration Catholics whose demography approached that of Presbyterians and who shared similar values about higher education, broadening cultural experiences, and the benefits of pluralism. He was not sure about the new waves of Catholic, especially Latino, immigrants.

I pressed him. Presbyterianism is decidedly word-oriented, and the translation of religion into a general ethics comes more easily. Would Roman Catholic liturgy and sacrament provide an element of identity not so available to his Presbyterian baby boomers? Hoge did not rule out the possibility, not before someone had done the research. But he was doubtful.

Now he has done the research, this time working with three other scholars, William D. Dinges, a professor of religious studies at Catholic University, and two sociologists, Mary Johnson, S.N.D. de N., and Juan L. Gonzales Jr. The results are published in *Young Adult Catholics*.

To their credit, the authors have highlighted findings that confounded their expectations and took them by surprise. One turned out to be that Catholics are indeed different. Even when these young adults were at odds with the church and disconnected from parish life, the high percentage "who called themselves Catholic surprised us," the authors write. Only 10 percent of Catholic adults under forty have actually ceased to consider themselves Catholic, and no more Latinos than non-Latinos.

That was not the only surprise. Having carefully designed

Books discussed in this essay

Young Adult Catholics
Religion in the Culture of Choice
Dean R. Hoge, William D. Dinges, Mary Johnson, S.N.D. de N., Juan L. Gonzales Jr.
University of Notre Dame Press, $19, 296 pp.

The Basic Guide to Young Adult Ministry
John C. Cusick and Katherine F. DeVries
Orbis, $25, 223 pp.

Peter Steinfels *writes the "Beliefs" column for the* New York Times.

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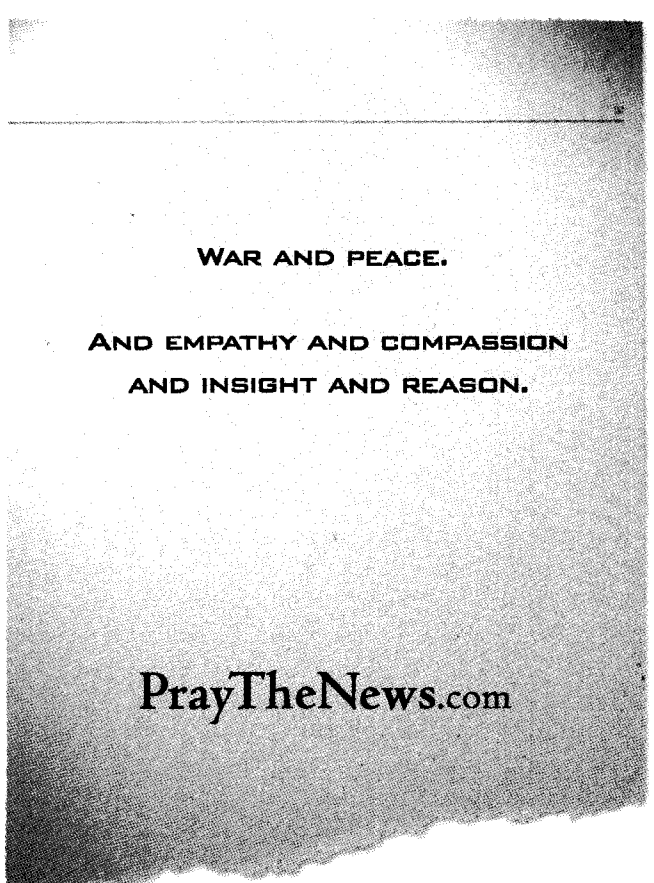
their research to get a more accurate reading than is usual on young Latino adults, the researchers found that, contrary to other reports, Latinos among their sample did not seem to be leaving the Catholic Church at a higher rate than the non-Latinos.

Not all of *Young Adult Catholics* is surprising, not all of it is good news, and some of it raises more questions than it answers. But it should not be ignored. When it comes to generalizing about young people—and who doesn't generalize about young people, including young people themselves?—most of us fall back on our own personal history or the histories of our siblings, children, nieces, nephews, friends, or students. A book like this provides a statistical reality check. For anyone harboring a suspicion that his or her favorite anecdote may not necessarily sum up the condition of 20 million young adults, a study like this is invaluable.

The research was designed on "where-are-they-now?" lines similar to those of *Vanishing Boundaries*. A random sample of American Catholics who would be between ages twenty and thirty-nine as of 1997 was constructed from confirmation records in parishes chosen to be representative in terms of region, class, ethnicity, and rural, suburban, and city location. Over eight hundred of these young adults who had been confirmed years earlier were tracked down and interviewed by phone in either English or Spanish. The findings were fleshed out with focus groups, in-depth interviews, and several other national surveys.



Focusing on confirmands has the advantage of using a group that had a common starting point: some roughly similar degree of documented church involvement during adolescence. At the same time, because only about 60 to 70 percent of non-Latino youth and 30 to 40 percent of Latinos were confirmed during the 1970s and '80s, the young adults of this study do not represent all current young adult Catholics. Both the non-Latino and Latino samples turn out to be somewhat more educated, more white-collar, and more involved in church life than the average for Catholics aged twenty to thirty-nine.

It is safe to say, then, that the study's findings are slightly rosier than the reality. Not that they are overwhelmingly rosy to begin with. *Young Adult Catholics* is such a mix of good news and bad news, reassuring findings and alarming findings that the authors themselves often seem hard pressed to reach a clear judgment. Nonetheless, their final word runs more to alarm than to reassurance.

In a number of core Catholic teachings, these young adults appear largely orthodox. Over 90 percent affirmed the divinity of Jesus. At least 80 percent expressed belief in "a divine judgment after death." Given a list of beliefs and practices and asked "how essential is each...to *your* vision [emphasis in the original question] of what the Catholic faith is," young Catholics ranked highest the "belief that God is present in the sacraments," with 65 percent labeling it as "essential." "Belief that Christ is really present in the Eucharist" virtually tied with "helping the poor" for second place. On another question, about 90 percent "strongly agree or moderately agree" that "in Mass the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ." Sacramentalism apparently remains central to young adults' Catholicism.

At least in principle, one wants to add. In practice, only one out of five attends church weekly, probably fewer than the percentage who scarcely ever darken the church steps. And this sample, remember, is probably more religious than other young adult Catholics. Not surprisingly, almost two-thirds don't consider going to Mass necessary to "be a good Catholic."

It is in regard to young adults' beliefs about the church itself that the findings are perhaps most significant and most difficult to interpret. On the one hand, there is that "kind of glue holding them closer to their church" that the authors find so striking. Three out of four of the non-Latino Catholics and four out of five of the Latinos cannot imagine themselves "being anything other than Catholic." Almost as many agree that "there is something very special about being Catholic which you can't find in other religions."

But what is that something? Asked about the claim that the Catholic Church "is the one true church," less than half the non-Latinos and less than two-thirds of the Latinos agree. At least half these confirmed Catholics agree that "all the great religions of the world are equally true and good." Still higher percentages agree that "all the major world religions

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are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth." How should one evaluate these responses? The authors wisely keep in mind the cultural mood favoring pluralism and frowning on anything smacking of religious exclusivity. They also note that, to their surprise, about three quarters of the sample turned around and agreed with the statement, "The only absolute Truth for humankind is in the teachings of Jesus Christ."

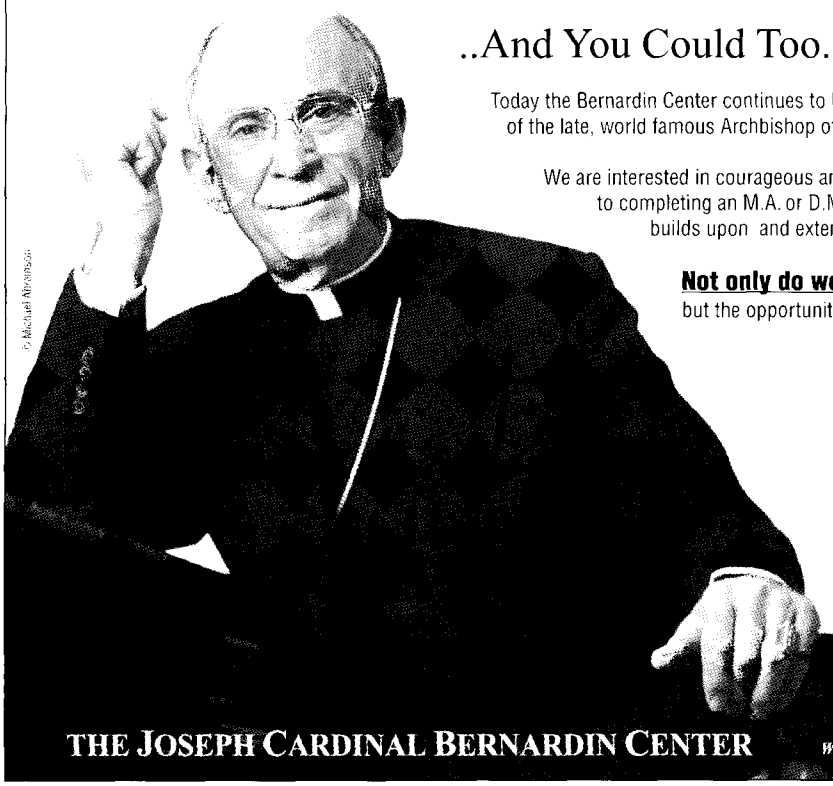
No similar ambiguity marks young adult Catholics' attitudes toward enlarging the roles of women and lay people in the church and facilitating wider discussion of "doctrinal issues such as divorce, remarriage, and human sexuality." They are overwhelmingly in favor of "more empowerment of laity and women," regardless of their theological views, their Mass attendance, or their involvement in parish life. Young adults were also overwhelmingly convinced that Catholics have a duty to oppose racism, close the gap between rich and poor, and preserve the environment—and again this was true across the board, indeed even more true of parish activists and the more theologically traditional than of others. However, when the sample was asked not just about the duties of Catholics but about the church itself, somewhat more than half agreed that it "should stick to religion and not be involved in economic or political issues."

Another area of near unanimity was religious education. In focus groups and interviews, virtually all respondents disparaged their own experience with religious education. Retreat experiences constituted the one really bright spot in these recollections. At the same time, virtually all young adult Catholics said that they wanted their children to receive some religious instruction. "Here is a finding of far-reaching importance to the church," say the authors. "Stated in market terms: there is a vast market for child religious education programs, and it is clearly in the Catholic community's interest to serve this need effectively."

As for Vatican II, more than 40 percent of the non-Latinos and 70 percent of the Latinos had never heard of the council, and of those who had heard of it only about half said they had ever read about or discussed any "of its ideas."

Of considerable importance is one other finding, that half of the married non-Latino Catholics under forty married non-Catholics. (The figure was a quarter for Latinos/Latinas.) A discovery a decade ago that half the marriages of young Jews were to non-Jews set off a shock wave in the Jewish community. For Jews, as a small group within a largely Christian population, the lesson of history, at least so far, is that intermarriage means assimilation and disappearance. For Catholics, a large group whose young are for the most part marrying fellow Christians, the consequences are not so clear. Yet it seems that remarkably little thought has been given to this development from the viewpoint of Catholic identity and continuity rather than the viewpoint of easing marital and child-rearing tensions. Is this a case of being ecumenically correct?

Cardinal Bernardin Lives Here



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The authors' attention to Latino Catholics is praiseworthy and rewarding. Yet what is perhaps their central conclusion I find almost completely unconvincing: "In time," they write, "the surge of Latinos will change everything." Certainly everyone wants to believe that. For Latinos, it comes as a long-overdue acknowledgment of their importance. For non-Latino church leaders, it promises fresh recruits, reinforcements to fill in what seem to be the thinning ranks of the old immigrants' descendants. But the study's own data suggest, on the contrary, that the surge of Latinos will change relatively little.

As a member of a largely Latino parish, I am not denying the obvious: the more Latino Catholics, the more Masses in Spanish, and the more Virgenes de Guadalupe instead of Infants of Prague or Anthonys of Padua. And yes, there are distinctive and quite attractive aspects, primarily family-based, to Latino Catholicism, as there have been to every immigrant group's religiosity. But nothing suggests that these aspects will prove any more or less resistant than non-Latino forms of Catholicism to the pressures of education, upward mobility, and secularization, or any more or less resourceful in coping with the internal problems of the American church. What this study underlines are the many striking similarities, not differences, between Latinos and non-Latinos, including the high rate of intermarriage by the third generation and the minuscule percentage of the Latino sample who chose to be interviewed in Spanish.

The authors hypothesize that assimilation will come much more slowly for Latinos than for earlier immigrant groups, a conclusion that seems to rest on one part wishful thinking by scholars protective of Latino identity and three parts unwillingness by political liberals to admit the openness of American society and economy to outsiders. My guess, however, is quite the opposite: The pace of change will accelerate; Latinos will assimilate far more rapidly than European immigrants, especially to a popular culture that is quite ready to incorporate Latino elements in its voracious wooing of new consumers.

Young Adult Catholics concludes on a sobering note. If these young adults, ten or fifteen years after their confirmation, are largely remaining Catholic, their Catholicism can look increasingly attenuated. That may not be true for the 10 percent whom the authors label "core Catholics." But much larger percentages are distanced from parish life and church institutions, have little sense of church authority, and are not sufficiently versed in the distinctive symbols, narratives, and vocabulary of Catholicism to articulate to themselves a coherent Catholic identity. Moreover, the Catholic identity they do possess appears to be less and less central in their lives. On the one hand, they breathe in a culture of religious individualism; on the other hand, they are no longer tied to the Catholic community by their most important friendships or even their spouses. Although young Catholics are different, in other words, many are not *that* different.

"The implications are portentous," the authors write. "If many young adults now believe that Catholicism is simply another denomination, that it 'doesn't really matter whether you're Catholic or not,' that there is nothing unique or distinctive about Catholicism, or that all that really counts is a generic Christian lifestyle, Catholicism's institutional vitality, public witness, and capacity to retain its young are in jeopardy."

There is little here that hasn't been said before. *Young Adult Catholics* simply makes it harder to ignore. This is not, after all, news that most of us want to hear, and we have found a variety of ways to deflect it. *Young Adult Catholics* warns us against four of the more consoling ways we arm ourselves against the seriousness of the situation.

One is the belief that all's well as long as high percentages of young adults register agreement with a few core doctrines—though they reject the ecclesiastical teachings and the sacramental and communal participation that have conveyed and sustained those doctrines. A second is that

Spiritual, not religious

Like *Young Adult Catholics*'s chapter on Latinos, the chapter on young adult Catholic spirituality is full of useful insights and findings, including the familiar disconnection between "spirituality" and "religion." Here, too, I wonder about their primary conclusion: "Spirituality is strong," they write. "Young adult Catholics remain overwhelmingly spiritual."

Can one reach the authors' conclusion on the basis that a narrow majority (48 percent of the non-Latino sample and 58 percent of the Latinos) reported praying "about once a day" or more? Daily prayer, even a quick prayer at rising, retiring, or before a meal, seems a minimal measure of spirituality. The comparable rates for older Catholics or for Americans in general are 70 percent or higher.

One assumes that confrontation with sickness, sin, death, disappointment, and solitude forces religious questions on some portion of this age group, as on any other; and there is a widespread impression that America's confrontation with terrorism has underlined these questions for a generation that till now was largely spared a national trauma. But, frankly, there is scant evidence here that, at least before September 11, spiritual searching was a major preoccupation for most of this group. P.S.

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marriage and childrearing can be relied upon to bring young adults back into church life—though marriage is coming later, disconnectedness is lasting longer, increasing numbers are marrying non-Catholics and doing so outside the church.

A third is that today's young adults are merely a new species of "communal" or "cultural" Catholic. The authors deeply appreciate Andrew Greeley's notion of "communal Catholics" as pointing to those who remain profoundly Catholic even while becoming detached from the institutional church, but Greeley's concept, they add, assumed an absorption of communal experience and cultural tradition. Today's young adults are not communal Catholics, the authors write, but are the children of communal Catholics. "Their knowledge of the language and symbolism of the tradition is more limited and sparse—as is their experience of Catholicism as a tight-knit culture system." The final refuge is in the idea that what young adults may have lost in other dimensions of their faith they make up for in commitment to the poor and social justice. The church appears to have done a remarkable job in restoring awareness of that dimension of the Gospel. But the authors warn that this concern about social justice appears to float free of religious identity and be more theoretical than actual.

The ultimate point is not to justify optimism or pessimism—although it is to increase urgency. "A flashing yellow light," is the way one author has described this study. It is not a report card. It is not an indictment. It is an assessment of how much needs to be done—quickly—and where church leaders might best begin.

John C. Cusick and Katherine F. DeVries, the director and associate director of the Chicago Young Adult Ministry Office, have written a very different kind of book but one that clearly reflects the same reality—and the same urgency. *The Basic Guide to Young Adult Ministry* is what its title indicates, a manual filled with lists of dos and don'ts, examples and anecdotes. But animated by a palpable enthusiasm and respect for the young adults with whom the authors have worked, the book reasserts a sense of struggling, generous individuals easily lost in aggregated statistics like those I have summarized.

From Cusick and DeVries as well as from *Young Adult Catholics*, one can easily discern the importance of building on that residual sacramentalism: Sunday liturgies that are genuinely communal (for example, the music works) and meaningful (for example, the ritual has been explained and the enactment fits the meaning); preaching that is intelligent, heartfelt, and skillful; marriages and baptisms that are prepared, celebrated, and then followed up with the kind of ample pastoral attention that has characterized the R.C.I.A. Religious education for adults as well as for children (Chicago's Theology-on-Tap program has been widely adopted), social-justice programs, and retreats have engaged young adult Catholics by effectively responding to their intellectual questions, personal generosity, and spiritual hunger.

There is much talk, some of it inaccurate or alarmist, about this or that date when Social Security or Medicare funds will run out and a whole system will tilt into crisis. The Catholic Church's relationship with its young adults is not unlike that. Decade by decade, the funds are running lower and lower, while the countermeasures remain halting and inadequate. Of course, the bookkeeping of belief and commitment is less clear, the time of reckoning harder to predict, and the whole process more gradual. But when the time comes, no statutory change or adjustment of rates, whether modest or drastic, will be able to compensate for the deficit. It will simply be too late. □

What about sex?

Of course, no study can ask all the questions or analyze all the data that one might wish. I was sorry *Young Adult Catholics* did not print the full schedule of questions used for the interviews, did not separate out those who held certain positions "moderately" and "strongly," and did not provide more data on education and social class. I was sorry to see how little attention was given to issues of sexuality, perhaps not an easy topic to deal with in phone interviews but hardly a minor issue for young adults. If the culture's views on premarital sex, cohabitation, and homosexuality have undergone a major shift in the last twenty-five years, the views and maybe the behavior of young Catholics have shifted even more. From one of the nation's more conservative groups, they have become one of the more permissive. The consequences of the yawning gaps between Catholic teachings and the culture, on the one hand, and between Catholic teachings and the convictions of many young Catholics, on the other, are alluded to in this study but not really explored. Can the consequences be as minimal as many church leaders appear eager (or resigned) to believe? The prevailing pastoral strategy is to look the other way, to remember that the church probably once made too much of sexual issues, and to wait for marriage to bring church teachings, Catholics' beliefs, and cultural attitudes back into some kind of alignment. But that doesn't quite happen, either, if one is to believe the still smoldering conflicts over birth control that turn up in this study. P.S.

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Benjamin Ivry

A SINGLE NOTE, A SILENT BEAT

The spare beauty of Arvo Pärt

At age sixty-six, the Estonian-born composer Arvo Pärt continues to defy categories. In a new compilation album from Virgin Classics, *Classical Dreams: Music to Inspire*, Pärt's 1990 "Summa" for strings has a noble, open-hearted spirit, and does not sound difficult or unfamiliar like other, more modernist new music. Pärt's music, included on the soundtrack of the recent film *The Thin Red Line*, about the 1942 Battle of Guadalcanal, was lauded by one critic who stated that it nudged the audience "onto a higher plane of awareness."

Pärt's work was not always acclaimed. In his earlier years, when Estonia was still under Soviet rule, some of his works with overt religious content, like the 1968 choral work "Credo," were banned by the government. The young composer reacted by immersing himself in the study of old Franco-Flemish choral music from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, by such composers as Machaut, Ockeghem, Obrecht, and Josquin. After some years of what he later called "despair and search," he emerged in 1976 with a new and extremely spare approach to composition. A new minimal style limited itself to one tone—or combinations of two and three chords—as the basic musical content of a work. Pärt states, "I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements—with one voice, two voices."

Some outstanding chamber pieces, including "Fratres" (on Telarc CD-80387) and "Tabula Rasa," (on EMI Classics for Pleasure 2221), both from 1977, resulted. Both sound like music with links to the Early Middle Ages, balancing silence with sound in an emotional, sweet-sounding way. Some American minimalists like Philip Glass, despite commercial success, seem to write music on automatic pilot, undemanding and lulling for both composer and listener alike. The popular British composer John Tavener, like Pärt much involved with Eastern Orthodoxy, has been criticized for sugary-sounding works. But Pärt has, according to a statement welcoming him five years ago as honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, "created a body of religious and secular music that simultaneously moves the heart and impresses itself on the mind through its purity of craftsmanship." He often composes "with no more than basic scales," the anonymous academic noted, but the results transcend mere simplicity.

As a devout Orthodox Christian, Pärt's leaving Estonia in 1981 for the relative freedom of West Germany allowed him to create major choral works of explicitly religious inspiration, such as a "Te Deum" (1984–6), "Miserere" (1992), and *Johannes-Passion* (1982), which has just received a brilliant new recording on Finlandia Records (8573-87182-2).

Lasting just over one hour—concise as Passions go—Pärt's setting in Latin of Saint John's text has the role of the Evangelist sung by a vocal quartet, movingly making a communal event of the Gospel narration. Set with austere simplicity and economy, the chorus represents crowds of soldiers, guards, and priests as well as individual characters like Saint Peter. There is utter Northern desolation in the unadorned vocal setting of Jesus on the Cross declaring to Mary, "*Mulier, ecce filius tuus*" ("Woman, behold thy son!"), followed by the consolation of a triumphal chorus, "You who have suffered for us, have mercy upon us. Amen." As one critic put it, Pärt's works have "one underlying theme: the numinous." Filled with meaningful pauses as well as melodies that hearken back to early church chanting, Pärt's music reinvents what is familiar by a deep and personal involvement in past traditions.

Despite the composer's emaciated appearance, with beard and tonsure-like baldness, Pärt rejects any projection of sacredness upon his person, rather than his music. As he told the British press, "I am not a prophet, not a cardinal, not a monk. I am not even a vegetarian. Don't be confused by cheap tabloid information. Of course, I am in monasteries more often than in concert halls—but then again, you have no idea how many times I am in concert halls." Still, a recent prospective biographer recounts that Pärt gave him, as a parting gift, the Russian Orthodox Archimandrite Sophrony's biography of his spiritual master, Saint Siluoan the Athonite.

A longtime resident of Berlin, Pärt premiered a well-received new work in February, "Littlemore Tractus," to commemorate the bicentenary of John Henry Newman with a ten-minute setting for choir and organ of a text Newman preached at Littlemore 170 years ago. With new works, seemingly constant revisions and rearrangements of older works, and superb new recordings like the *Johannes-Passion*, Pärt's stature as modern master becomes increaslingly clear. □

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Wanted: hobbits, fairies & wind-up toys

Daria Donnelly

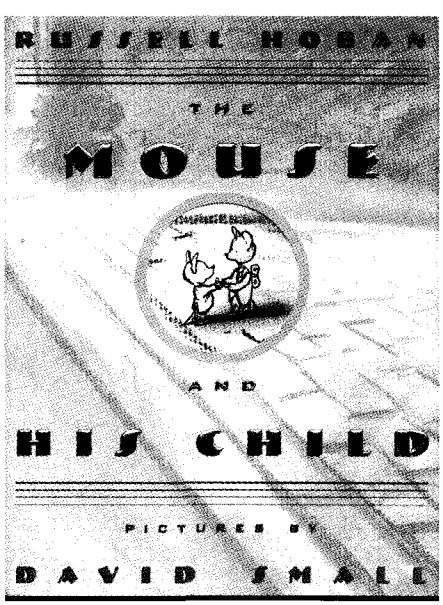
"What the world needs now is hobbits." That's what Bob Shaye, CEO of New Line Cinema, said at a public forum in New York City following mass murder at the World Trade Center. His remarks were greeted with hisses and derision (*New Yorker*, October 22). Perhaps cynics in the audience thought it a tasteless plug for New Line's forthcoming *The Lord of the Rings* films. But Shaye is right. That art affords an opportunity to withdraw from the "real" world to some other state is its greatest gift to humanity. It's one we should fiercely covet for our children.

For what happens when we, young and old, read imaginative literature? We withdraw. Novelist Philip Roth puts it well: "The best readers come to fiction to be free of all that noise, to have set loose in them the consciousness that's otherwise conditioned and hemmed in by all that isn't fiction. This is something that every child, smitten by books, understands immediately, though it's not at all a childish idea about the importance of reading." The noise to which he refers is that emanating from "a world where everybody else is working to change, persuade, tempt, and control" us.

Trouble, fear, disturbance of the usual: these might especially spur us to seek a different consciousness in books. But duress erodes the concentration required for reading. And worse, it is precisely in such times that puritans, positivists, and the impatient of every political stripe rise up to shame readers. During World War II, *Commonweal*'s children's book reviewer, Claire Huchet Bishop (of whom more below) was horrified to learn that many nursery schools for the children of defense-industry workers had banned fairy tales, and that imaginative literature itself was in need of vigorous defense. Her "The Ban on Imagination" (November 19, 1943) credits to imaginative literature the capacity to transform us, to increase our understanding, solidarity, and wisdom. Bishop staked moral, religious, and even national life on story reading. "Let us not," she warned, "attempt to bar access to the world of mystery lest we become a nation with the fate of Lot's wife."

How many of those writing for children today value withdrawal? How many write to smite their readers with the imagined, the beautiful, and the fantastical? Too few, according to Harold Bloom in the manifesto-like introduction to his new anthology *Stories and Poems for Extremely Intelligent Children of All Ages* (Scribner, $27.50, 573 pp., Ages 5 to adult). Contemporary children's literature and the Age of Information, in his view, conspire against children, against the possibility of their looking for, let alone finding wisdom, pleasure, and companionship in books.

Bloom hyperbolizes. But his praise is a bull's-eye. The best, truest children's stories and poems are those whose art provides lasting companionship. It is these that Bloom anthologizes and celebrates: "Where will we find ourselves more truly and more strange? Ideally, in family and in friends, or at last, if possible, in life partnerships. Yet...in all human love that something deep within us may go on feeling lonely....I was a very lonely child, despite a loving family circle, and remain solitary after a lifetime of teaching, rereading, and writing. But how much more isolated I would be if poems and stories had not nurtured me, and if they did not go on fostering me. The child alone with her or his book is, for me, the true image of potential happiness, of something evermore about to be."



Most of the poems and stories Bloom selects are from the Romantic, Victorian, and Edwardian eras. The emphasis is on nonsense, fable, wonder—and fairy tale. Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear preside. Aesop, Grimm, *Arabian Nights*, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Oscar Wilde are richly represented along with less familiar writers and stories.

Bloom's anthology reveals itself slowly. In fact, it is initially off-putting, and not just because of its infelicitous title. Bloom mixes literature written for children (and adults) with literature that probably never had a child in mind. This considerably ups the castor-oil effect. He orders readings somewhat opaquely (into seasons), and provides no guidance for how to use the book. But his taste is terrific. Dip in, and let yourself be governed by mood and caprice.

Bloom, alas, does not cover post-World War I literature, the stories that emerged after, and because of, the wonder eras he so appreciates. Nor does he uncover the impulses that have turned much of children's literature away from the value of the imagination per se, toward other values. But both should be dwelt on.

First, other values: Most children's

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writers, parents, and teachers want a better world, and want children to be better in the one we've got. Reading (both ability and enthusiasm for), manners, and gender, racial, and international relationships—all these are manifestly imperfect. Quick fixes tempt: the transparent message, the easy pleasure, information dressed in a story. What literary resources would you use to teach a child about the Middle East and Islam? The Teaching Resource Center at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has put together an excellent annotated list, available through its outreach coordinator, Barbara Petzen. The recommended books range from stories and poems *about* unfamiliar persons to those *by* them. I instinctively favor imaginative books *by*, affirming the unvarnished hope of the great Arabic poetry translator, Salma Jayyusi: "If we read one another, we won't kill one another." And while informational fictions are direct and swift in effect, they are not memorable.

Great stories and poems work slowly on us and on the world, their reading being more like prayer than social action. A child withdrawn into a great work of imagination is, above all, havign an encounter: an en-couraging and enlarging one. That's how Russell Hoban presents it in his new picture book, *Jim's Lion* (illustrated by Ian Andrew, Candlewick, $15.99, Ages 5 and up). It would be a shame if this book ends up just in hospital waiting rooms. *Jim's Lion* tells the story of a boy facing grave illness and possible death in surgery. He gains courage when his African-born nurse tells him about finders, dream-vision animals who sustain people in their darkest hours and return them to the world. In Hoban's restrained hands (and with the help of Andrew's intelligent pictures), Jim's encounter with his finder never strays into the maudlin. Instead, it delicately suggests the new resources that children (and those who write for them) have as a result of the contact between non-Western folk belief and Western views on the imagination. Few have mined this happy aspect of globalization. And if you are looking for a book to help address children's post-September 11 anxiety and sorrow, this is it.

Russell Hoban is also responsible for the best publication this year, a new edition of his 1967 cult classic *The Mouse and His Child* (pictures by David Small, Scholastic, $16.95, 244 pp., Ages 9 and up). Although Hoban has quite a following, from preschool lovers of the badger Frances to adult fans of his postapocalypse novel, *Riddley Walker*, this, his first novel, had fallen out of print.

The story follows a wind-up pair of tin mice, a dancing father and son joined at the hands, as they journey to the freedom of self-winding. This is not in any sense an "easy" read: The sentences are demanding, the jokes pitched high, the philosophy rigorous and pretty dark. There is probably no other children's book where death is so remorseless and rapid in its effect (it's so terse, that I burst into laughter when a frustrated hawk spits out the tin mice and declares, "Ugh! You aren't part of the balance of nature!").

The bad guy—Manny Rat, lord of the dump and cruel master of the discarded windups—is potent. The good guys—an occasionally insightful Frog, a daffy Muskrat, some misanthropic birds, and an array of ragged wind-ups—don't exactly inspire confidence. And yet they triumph. It's a mistake to read *The Mouse and His Child* as menacing or too tough. It's a blazing portrait of good achieved. And one I trust. Why? Because Hoban does not underestimate either evil or good, terror or tenderness, the natural order or what can happen when one dares to think outside the terms of nature.

Expect laughs but also disconsolations. *The Mouse and His Child*, to my ear, is a dark version of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. You can almost match set piece for set piece. Grahame's mystical "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" resonates here in a quirky, tragicomic scene in which the pond-submerged mouse child searches for an end to infinity by staring at a Bonzo Dog Food can label. The label pictures a dog holding a can of food with a label of a dog holding a can of food and so on. Is there anything beyond the Last Visible Dog (this phrase also serves as the title of a pretentious philosophical play put on by the Caws of Art company and is the name of the mice's eventual home)? When the label is torn away, the mouse discovers that what is beyond infinity is himself, glimpsed for the first time in the reflective tin. You don't have to know Grahame, or 1 Corinthians 13:12 ("through a glass darkly") to feel the depth of aloneness presented. Or the importance of his father's hands still laced in his own. But it helps. Which is why reading great books matters: because they lead children deeper and deeper into a lifelong, expansive territory of insight and pleasure, made not of one or two books, but of many in conversation across time.

The contentment of a child, alone with her book, provides the opening image of a very funny, smart new picture book, *Elsie Times Eight* (Hyperion, $15.95, 32 pp., Ages 4–8) by Natalie Babbitt. A hard-of-hearing fairy godmother and set of well-meaning parents conspire to turn a perfectly happy, absorbed Elsie into eight noisy, brawling, unwanted Elsies. Of course, eight identical girls cannot share food, parents, a bed, a cat, let alone a book. Babbitt, one of the giants in children's literature, loves to play with the boundaries and conventions of fiction. Her famous novel, *Tuck Everlasting* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $4.95, 139 pp., Ages 9–12), is about immortality, the state in which book characters, but not we, live. She brings a similarly playful intelligence to the language and pictures of *Elsie Times Eight*. The characters look modern, with their hairdos and glasses, but are costumed in fairy-tale outfits. Once things get straightened out among the hapless adults, Elsie returns to her reading, and we finish ours.

If you like your adults scary as well as inept, there is always Brock Cole. His fine new picture book is *Larky Mavis* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $16, Ages 4 and up). I confess to being a reluctant fan of the well-regarded Cole. His 1987 novel, *The Goats* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $4.95, 184 pp., Ages 9–12), wows. It's about two misfits at summer camp, the cruelties they suffer, and the friendship they forge. But only in *The Goats* do Cole's

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adults have the capacity for shame; in subsequent novels, they are increasingly negligent, narcissistic, even predatory. Cole's touch in picture books is lighter, and more convincing.

Larky Mavis is a slightly daft girl (always "mooning about, mooning about") who notices that a peanut she is about to pop in her mouth is actually a baby. She calls it Heart's Delight. She feeds and comforts it. Meanwhile all the adults around her debate whether it is a deformed bird, a pig with four ears, a calf and a half. When the schoolmaster, parson, and doctor shift from patronizing neglect to active interest in separating the two, Heart's Delight utters its first words, "LET GO MY MA," and transports Larky high above the town. "They look exactly like the mice and the moles!" says Larky, looking down at the townspeople. Such are the happy reversals in perspective available to those who trust the imagination.

Perspective is all, when it comes to great illustration. One of the best was the late Margot Zemach, whose nursery-rhyme pictures are gathered in a new collection, *Some from the Moon, Some from the Sun* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $17, Ages 3 and up). Zemach's ability to pick an interesting focus, her quick wit, her varied styles and moods, always triumph. This collection of twenty-seven rhymes (grand, but disjointed by way of her absence) also presents a biography in pictures, many from unpublished illustrations held by her family. It includes a full bibliography of her work. Born in poverty, Zemach here confesses that she wanted to be an artist of social significance, but discovered a different talent along the way. She fully and unapologetically dedicated herself to her gift, in all its lushness: "children deserve detail, color, and excellence...the best an author and illustrator can provide."

Zemach answers one of the big questions: What books do our children deserve? Ones so good that the child will wonder, as does the boy in *Jim's Lion*: "Maybe everything else was a dream and this is the only thing that's real."

What can those stories do? Let the final thinking on that be devoted to Claire Huchet Bishop, who from 1952 to 1964 wrote *Commonweal*'s annual assessment of children's books. That feature (fifty to a hundred children's books surveyed, with extensive pages of advertisements for children's books) was first developed and written by managing editor Harry Lorin Binsse during World War II, when Bishop was reviewing books about conditions in her native France.

Bishop was born into a family of Breton storytellers, educated at the Sorbonne, and served as a storyteller at the first children's library in France, which she helped to found. After her marriage to an American, she moved to New York City. She wrote more than twenty-five children's books (including my childhood favorite, *Five Chinese Brothers*), and was a storyteller at the New York Public Library. Bishop has been on my mind lately, not only because of war, but because of a new work born out of her labor. The children's opera, *The Secret Cave*, by Judith Lane, is adapted from Bishop's 1952 children's story, *Twenty and Ten* (Puffin, $3.99, 26 pp., Ages 8–12).

After listening to this affecting work, performed last spring by the Children's Opera Company of Ossining, New York, I went back to Bishop's columns and her *Twenty and Ten*. Bishop's "The Ban on Imagination" provides a virtual blueprint to her fictional narrative of twenty French children outwitting Nazi soldiers, and successfully keeping hidden ten Jewish peers. The children outwit the Nazis by thoroughly knowing and playing out a story, the biblical "Flight into Egypt." "Who are the Jews?" shouts the Nazi soldier. I am, says the boy playing Joseph. I am, says Mary. I am, says Jesus. The children laugh. The Nazi is dumbfounded.

Judith Lane first read *Twenty and Ten* at age nine. She never forgot it. "It's been part of me my whole life," she told an interviewer. She had no familial ties to the people or events of the story; nevertheless, they became part of her own experience. And that's what a good story does. It opens, encourages, and stays. It keeps faith. □

Daria Donnelly *is* Commonweal*'s associate editor.*

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Does culture matter?

The Soul of Latin America
The Cultural and Political Tradition
Howard J. Wiarda
Yale University Press, $35, 417 pp.

Carlos Lozada

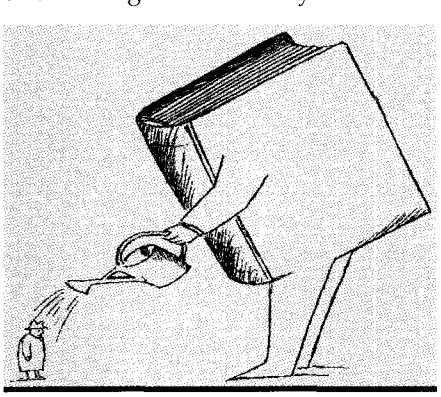
Among the international-affairs chattering classes, culture is king. Last year, Harvard University luminary Samuel P. Huntington coedited a major volume titled *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, with high-profile contributors ranging from Francis Fukuyama to Jeffrey Sachs. Moreover, since the end of the cold war, intellectuals around the world have decried the spread of American movies, music, and food as an insidious force that destroys local customs and warps the hearts and minds of global youth. And the recent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil only revived the notion that a conflict between Western and Islamic culture—a "clash of civilizations" as Huntington might call it—will be the defining struggle of the twenty-first century.

Cultural explanations are intuitive, straightforward, almost comforting. Nations and peoples behave differently simply because they are different. Look at their clothes, their customs, their beliefs—in a word, their culture. Yet the problem with culture is precisely its all-encompassing nature, its nearly tautological explanatory power. In their zeal to explain everything, cultural critics risk explaining nothing at all.

Howard J. Wiarda's *The Soul of Latin America: The Cultural and Political Tradition* offers an instance of cultural analysis run amok. Wiarda, a political scientist from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, purports to explain no less than "why and how Latin America differs from the United States, why its politics, society, and economies are at such variance from the American."

To understand Latin America today, Wiarda contends, we must first consider the cultural and intellectual traditions that Spanish conquerors brought to the New World in 1492. Apparently, in addition to their swords, horses, and diseases, the Spaniards also lugged some heavy cultural baggage across the Atlantic: ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, and medieval Christianity. Even Thomas Aquinas was a stowaway, as the Spaniards smuggled his scholasticism and rigid conceptions of social hierarchy into the Americas.

Wiarda depicts Latin American cultural development in remarkably linear terms. Spain's principal cultural influences (Greece, Rome, the Bible, Saint Thomas, Saint Augustine) and its key historical experiences (the seven-hundred-year occupation by the Moors and the gradual reconquest of Spain) produced a unique political culture, markedly different from that of the rest of Western Europe. It was more medieval, top-down and authoritarian, statist, and exploitative. Through the discovery and subsequent conquest of the Americas, "these traits were then transferred to Latin America, in which setting they not only persisted for centuries but actually received a new lease on life."



Not content to absorb one set of institutional and ideological fixtures from abroad, Wiarda's Latin America has cycled through various new foreign political ideologies since the end of Spanish colonialism. First came liberalism, which served as the impetus for the independence movements of the early 1800s. Wiarda is quick to note, however, that these were "conservative revolutions": The elites clamoring for independence simply wanted freedom from Spain, not true freedom for Latin America's lower classes. By the mid-nineteenth century, the region's intellectual and political leaders had embraced positivism, which derived from the writings of French philosopher Auguste Comte and emphasized order, group rights over individual liberties, and a society in which all members knew their correct place or "station." Nationalism and Marxism soon followed as the region's ideological trends *du jour*, enduring in moderate form to this day.

Yet despite the coming and going of various ideological fads, claims Wiarda, Latin America remains unable to shake free of its original political culture. Latin American democracy today remains "top-down, organic, elitist, centralized, statist, nonparticipatory, patrimonialist, executive-centered, and group—rather than individual—oriented." In other words, the culture Latin America inherited from Spain proved to be a curse from which there is no escape.

Wiarda may well be right in his bleak view of the prospects for democracy in Latin America. But the pesky question that Wiarda never answers—indeed, he wastes much ink skirting it—is how

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much weight cultural traditions carry compared to other factors. "To me and to most readers," explains Wiarda, "the continuing importance of cultural differences is so obvious as to be almost irrefutable." Perhaps, but defining a position as true doesn't make it so. On the few occasions in which he qualifies his argument, he does so to the point of rendering it useless, unwittingly proving the limitations of cultural analysis. "But that is not to say that cultural factors alone explain national development. Economic, class, institutional, and dependency elements need to be factored into any explanatory paradigm. So do chance, accidents, geography, and perhaps, sociobiology."

Wiarda frequently reminds readers of the valuable service his book provides by disabusing them of Latin American stereotypes they've picked up in *New Yorker* cartoons or in movies like *Bananas* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. (Mired as he is in dusty historical treatises, Wiarda would do well to visit his local twenty-first-century video store and pick up *Traffic* or *Amores Perros* to learn how most movie-going gringos perceive Latin America these days). Yet the only service—or disservice—that Wiarda gives readers is an intellectual rationale for all the old *Moon over Parador*-style stereotypes. Indeed, he endorses the stereotypes. "Even today in Latin America," he argues, "society seems to be made up of stock types: the oligarch, the priest, the military officer, the bureaucrat, the labor leader, the student, the peasant, and so on."

When he cannot marshal the evidence to support his positions, Wiarda simply speculates on how Latin Americans *really* think. "Deep down," the author tells us, "the oligarchies of Latin America do not believe that Indians and people of African descent are fully equal." His probe of the Latin mind goes deeper: "I am not convinced that those rich, white Latin American aristocrats—although they cannot say so publicly—are even now entirely convinced that Indians, blacks, and lower-class persons really have souls..."

Wiarda frequently contrasts the racism and social hierarchies of Latin America with the equality and social mobility of the United States; indeed, explaining this difference is the very purpose of his book. Yet his presentation of the United States is stunningly benign. He treats racism in the United States like a statistical aberration, barely meriting parenthetical references, as if America's racial divides were limited to those unfortunate few years during the 1860s. He glosses over inequities at home, simply arguing that "a society that is inegalitarian is one thing, but one that is unabashedly so is quite another." And he largely disregards unsavory U.S. policies toward Latin America during the cold war, which did much to retard democracy in the region. Ultimately, *The Soul of Latin America* may reveal as much about cultural self-perception in this country as it does about the cultural traditions of our neighbors to the south. □

Carlos Lozada *is associate editor of* Foreign Policy *magazine.*

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MERE GENES

Life Script
How the Human Genome Discoveries Will Transform Medicine and Enhance Your Health
Nicholas Wade
Simon and Schuster, $23, 201 pp.

The Misunderstood Gene
Michel Morange
Harvard University Press, $24.95, 222 pp.

M. Therese Lysaught

In June 2000, all eyes were on the East Room of the White House. There, Bill Clinton, a gaggle of scientists, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair (present via the wonders of technology) assembled to announce that the Human Genome had been "sequenced" (at least almost). Light bulbs flashed. Newspapers and media outlets proclaimed and parsed the news for weeks. It was, as far as one could tell, A Big Deal.

But was it? What did this really mean? The two books under consideration here present different perspectives on these questions.

Nicholas Wade, a science writer for the *New York Times*, believes that this was a turning point in the history of civilization, marking the moment that Western medicine began to emerge from the "dark ages" of surgery and chemical poisons.

Life Script proceeds in two sections, each of which could stand alone. The first three chapters tell the story of the race to sequence the human genome. Wade valiantly tries to make the story interesting. Instead, the tale is all too familiar. The bold, courageous, maverick outsider (Craig Venter and Celera Genomics), funded well by self-made venture capitalists, takes on the plodding, inept, traditional community of academic scientists. The clear virtue in Wade's tale is brash egoism; the hero is competitive capitalism in its new biotech garb. Think Ayn Rand meets scientific triumphalism.

With the tale told, Wade devotes the remaining four chapters to medical applications of genetic technology. Here he rehearses the many fascinating possibilities that are the stuff of newspaper headlines: gene chips enabling genome-wide diagnostic scans; new protein drugs and pharmacogenomics; cures for cancer; regenerative medicine (via embryonic and adult stem cells and cloning); genetic manipulation of the life span; and genomic engineering.

Critique would take far more than my allotted space. I will mention only three points. First, the book lacks an interpretive or analytical framework. Stylistically, it reads like a cross between a book-length newspaper article and a series of press releases for various biotech companies. No critique is offered; social implications of proposed new developments are not explored; and ethical concerns are mentioned only to be dismissed. Second, Wade's understanding of the genome is reductionist and determinist. Too many times, he refers to the body as "human clay" and the genome as the human "parts list," "the program," the "human instruction manual" which will enable scientists to "fix the human machine and in time to correct most—perhaps all—of its defects." But beyond traditional biological reductionism and determinism, Wade has an unwarranted confidence in the ability of genomic technicians to turn the straw of the sequence into gold. One might call this "biotech determinism." Too often to count, Wade promises that "over the next decade," "in a few years," "in two years," one biotech company or another will have created an application that will change the face of medicine as we know it. Interestingly, gene therapy receives little space in this book.

Closer attention to the history of that field over the past decade should cool any premature prognostication. If Wade exemplifies the hype about the implications of genetics, Michel Morange provides the antidote. For Morange, a professor of biology and the director of the Center for the Study of the History of Science at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, sequence data give us important information about the genome but cannot provide the most useful or interesting information, namely, how genes and organisms function. Morange's primary agenda is to debunk genetic determinism, especially the notion that there is a "gene for..." (fill in the blank with the disease or trait of your choice). His book brings to mind the work of Ruth Hubbard, although Morange's rhetoric is more subdued. Hubbard, the Harvard biochemist now emerita, is one of the authors of *Exploding the Gene Myth* (Beacon Press), which explores how the findings of genetic science are used to serve social and political ends.

"It's best not to get emotionally involved, Dr. Blumenkraft; they only live forty-eight hours."

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Morange seeks to correct common misperceptions or outdated understandings of what genes do. He begins with a history. It is not only the story of Mendel, Morgan, Mueller, and Watson/Crick. As a historian of science, Morange also tells the story of the conceptual development of the field of genetics (discussing, for example, the "reification" of genes, their transformation into an object). This ear for the conceptual allows him to mount a convincing critique of neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory as well as other questionable extrapolations from genetic findings.

After laying out history, Morange moves to a series of chapters in which he presents the case against the notion of genes "for" diseases, cancer, development, aging, longevity, death, behavior, sexuality, personality, intelligence, and morality. Morange analyzes the assumptions behind deterministic claims, offering a scientifically more nuanced and balanced account of how genes actually contribute to these outcomes. The centerpiece of his argument is "knockout" experiments. Knockout experiments proceed by modifying a specific gene, which results in either an abnormal protein product or none at all. With a protein modified, researchers can study the role it plays in the development and functioning of an organism. Sometimes, if you knock out a gene, it leads to an expected effect. Researchers like that. Sometimes, no discernible effect can be noted. This perplexes. Other times, an array of effects is discovered which could not have been predicted from what was previously known. This confounds. Thus, for Morange, knockout experiments powerfully challenge the notion of genetic determinism.

While Morange wants to give genes their proper credit, his money is with proteins. As he notes, "If molecular biologists had to designate one category of macromolecules as being essential for life, it would be proteins and their multiple functions, not DNA and genes...Asking what genes do simply means trying to find out how proteins—the structures of which are transmitted from generation to generation—enable the organism to carry out complex functions."

This shift in focus allows Morange to critique the dominant metaphors used to talk about genes. He rejects computing metaphors that liken the genome to a program and linguistic/textual metaphors that compare it to an instruction manual, information, or "the book of life." In their place, he proposes a new metaphor that is rich with possibility: that of memory. "DNA," he notes, "is the memory that life invented so that, at each generation, its active agents—proteins—could be efficiently reproduced." This contribution alone makes the book worth reading.

Any person interested in genetics should read *The Misunderstood Gene*. Although some of Morange's technical material may be difficult for the general reader, this book will correct a wealth of genetic misunderstandings. □

M. Therese Lysaught *teaches in the theology department at the University of Dayton.*

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(Continued from page 4)

and examining some problem or issue in the name of our common allegiance to Christ, as we face together, whether as Catholics or Protestants, a world that is tragically torn asunder precisely because it does not share the perspective we share—that the resources of both wisdom and grace are manifested through a cross and an empty tomb."

A teacher, activist, and public intellectual, Brown participated in the great struggles of his lifetime, serving as a freedom rider during the civil rights movement, a protester during the Vietnam War, a solicitous friend of Central American theologians and pastors in the 1980s, and, at the invitation of John XXIII, as an official Protestant observer during Vatican II.

May he rest in peace.

Catholic anti-Semitism

Marc Saperstein's review ("An Indictment: Half Right," September 28) of my book, *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism*, argues that two books coexist uneasily here. He characterizes the first, which shows how the Vatican treated the Jews where it had the power to treat them as it liked (in the Papal States 1814–70) as "a compelling work of scholarship." He dismisses the second—aimed at showing that the Catholic Church contributed to the rise of modern anti-Semitism beginning in the last two decades of the nineteenth century—as polemical.

My argument is summarized in the introduction: "As modern anti-Semitic movements took shape at the end of the nineteenth century, the church was a major player in them, constantly warning people of the rising "Jewish peril." What, after all, were the major tenets of this modern anti-Semitic movement if not such warnings as these: Jews are trying to take over the world…Jews are rapacious and merciless, seeking at all costs to get their hands on all the world's gold, having no concern for the number of Christians they ruin in the process; Jews are unpatriotic, a foreign body ever threatening the well-being of the people among whom they live; special laws are needed to protect society, restricting the Jews' rights and isolating them? Every single one of these elements of modern anti-Semitism was not only embraced by the church but actively promulgated by official and unofficial church organs."

Saperstein takes issue in particular with the brief chapter dealing with "race." This is significant because a major basis for the church's claim not to have been involved in the rise of modern anti-Semitism is the church's opposition to racial thinking of the sort embodied in Nazi anti-Semitism. I clearly state, however, that the pseudo-scientific theory of Jewish racial inferiority had always been in conflict with the church's position on human universality and on the desirability of converting the Jews. What I did argue is that most of the grounds for hatred of the Jews incorporated into modern anti-Semitism had nothing to do with race. Hence, it is a logical and historical mistake to exclude from the sources of modern anti-Semitism those groups or institutions that did *not attribute the Jews' evil to race.*

Once Jews came to be demonized by the church it became hard to convince people that there was no difference in nature between Jews and Christians. With Jews described by the Vatican as drinkers of the blood of Christian children, plotting to enslave the Christian population, eager to cheat, rob, and murder Christians at any opportunity, it was a short step to the belief that the Jews were sinister by nature.

Saperstein maintains that I provide no evidence that such racial thinking had any influence within the twentieth-century church. Yet what are we to make of such episodes as the following? As papal envoy to Warsaw, Achille Ratti, three years before becoming Pope Pius XI, reported to the Vatican secretary of state that "the most evil" influence in Poland was the

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Jews. The final report of his mission, penned by his assistant—whom he would shortly make an archbishop—characterized Poland's Jews as follows: "Not only do they differ visibly from Poles owing to their racial characteristics (shortness of stature, large nose, prominent ears, bags under their eyes, etc.)..." Saperstein disputes my argument that the Jesuit ban (in effect until 1946) on accepting any candidate for membership contaminated by Jewish blood up to five generations back was used by Nazis and Italian Fascists to bolster their own case for anti-Semitic practices. Yet I discuss one of the major Fascist proclamations issued in support of the anti-Semitic racial laws, a speech (subsequently widely distributed) by Roberto Farinacci, one of the highest ranking members of the central Fascist Grand Council, that relies heavily on exactly this Jesuit racial policy. Farinacci cited the great influence the Vatican-supervised Jesuit biweekly, *Civiltà Cattolica*, had in teaching people "that Judaism still aims for world domination," and observed that "the Aryan racism of the Jesuits is thus more severe than that of Germany itself." If the Nazis and Fascists could be faulted for anything, he concluded, it was "for not having applied all of their [that is, the Jesuits'] intransigence in our dealings with the Jews."

Saperstein complains that I nowhere show that the Catholic Church played any role in making the Holocaust possible. In fact, this is not a book about the Holocaust. It is certainly true that the Holocaust was the brainchild of the Nazis, and that the Nazis were a fundamentally pagan, anti-Christian movement. Yet the truth is that underlying the Holocaust was the widespread, deep hatred of the Jews found in large segments of the European population. Saperstein criticizes me for not offering any quantification of exactly what proportion of responsibility Christian anti-Semitism bore for these widespread views, or for the murder of the Jews of Europe. Should historians ignore the major role played by the Catholic Church—and various Protestant churches—in instilling deep hatred of the Jews because we cannot quantify the impact this had on making the Holocaust possible? Is Saperstein really denying that this underlying mass anti-Semitism was unrelated to the Holocaust?

DAVID I. KERTZER
Providence, R.I.

The reviewer replies:

Professor Kertzer misrepresents some of the points in my review, and fails to respond to others.

"[Saperstein] dismisses the second [component of the book] as polemical." This part of the book is indeed polemical. But is it dismissive to write, as I did, "After this book it will be considerably more difficult to defend the sharp demarcation between the church and modern anti-Semitism that the 'We Remember' statement maintains"?

"Saperstein maintains that no evidence is provided in the book that racial thinking ever had any influence within the twentieth-century church."

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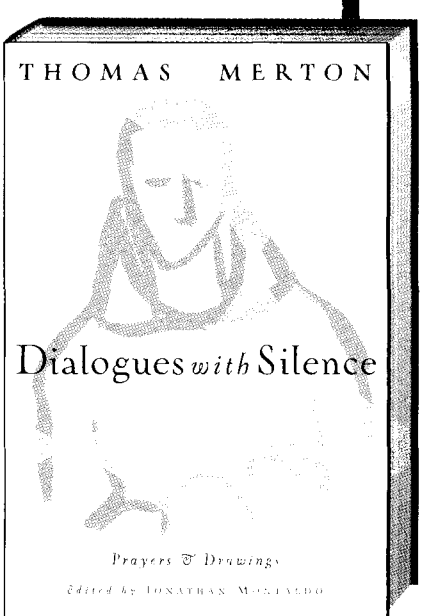

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No such assertion is in my review. What I maintained is that there is no evidence that the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish "purity of blood" legislation—the foundation of Kertzer's claim that "the church was involved in the development of racial thinking about Jews"—had any influence on the development of nineteenth-century racist doctrine. The issue is not, as Kertzer puts it here, whether some leading churchmen held "that the Jews were sinister by nature." The issue is whether they taught that even after baptism, this uniquely sinister nature remained, and was transmitted to future generations genetically.

Kertzer cites at length the Italian Fascist Roberto Farinacci to substantiate his claim that Jesuit practice was "used by Nazis and Italian Fascists to bolster their own case for the Christian basis of their own anti-Semitic practices." My point was that he provided no documentation for the assertion that this precedent was "used by Nazis." The Italian Fascists produced discriminatory legislation; they did not produce the "Final Solution." Indeed, Italy—the only country where most of the inhabitants could read the periodicals cited so extensively in the book—was one of the least anti-Semitic countries in Europe, and the survival rate of its Jewish population was one of the highest.

"Saperstein complains that I nowhere show that the Catholic Church played any role in making the Holocaust possible." My point was actually different: Kertzer's claim that the teachings and actions of the church "helped make [the Holocaust] possible" is a nebulous innuendo rather than a testable historical assertion. I did not ask for precise "quantification" of the role of the church. I asked for clarification as to whether he is claiming that it would have been impossible for the Nazis to have risen to power in Germany, and to have put their genocidal program into effect, without the material documented in his book, or just a bit more difficult. To this question, which strikes me as not at all insignificant, we have still not received an answer.

The formulation of the question "Is Saperstein really denying that this underlying mass anti-Semitism was unrelated to the Holocaust" is so convoluted that I would not attempt an answer. Let me, instead, suggest a different question. Assume, for the sake of argument, that the Polish population harbored a deep hatred of the Jews, and that this was instilled by the Catholic Church. Is Kertzer really asserting that had the local population not been anti-Semitic, the Nazis would have been unable to murder millions of Jews in conquered and occupied Poland, where the penalty for aiding a Jew was summary execution?

Kertzer states that "this is not a book about the Holocaust." Yet the author makes the Holocaust hover over the book—from the introduction to the final pages, especially in part 3, which he titles "On the Eve of the Holocaust," though (except for the last two pages) its story ends in 1922. The Holocaust is prominent in the book's promotion. Kertzer's work has many strengths that my review praised, but indictments of the leadership of a religious community for complicity in mass murder should be made with a precision I find lacking in *The Popes against the Jews*.

MARC SAPERSTEIN

Peter & the Volf

We noticed, in the November 9 issue, that the "barque of Peter" became the "bark of Peter" (woof, woof!) in Tilley's review essay, and that in Lawrence S. Cunningham's review of Doyle's book, the theologian "Miroslav Volf" was renamed "Miroslav Wolf" (another howler?). May we suggest a vacation for your spell-check program? DENNIS DOYLE

TERRENCE W. TILLEY

Dayton, Ohio

From the editors: The American Heritage Dictionary now prefers "bark" to "barque," so we have it on higher authority. Our apologies to Mr. Volf.

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FLORIDA FAÇADES

E.F. Roberts

Vanderbilt Beach abuts the Gulf of Mexico along the northern rim of Naples, Florida. The area is increasingly dominated by hi-rise residential condominiums. Such is the market at the moment that units in new buildings are sold out months before construction starts. Four hundred thousand dollars may get you a unit, but not one with a good Gulf prospect.

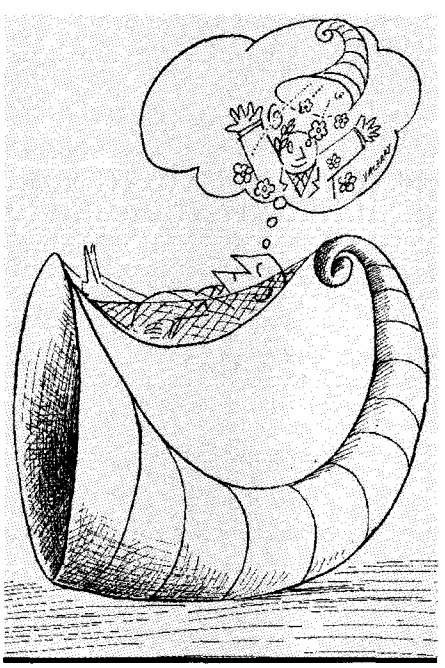
Further south one gets into parts of the city where large homes dot the shoreline, relics of the old days. Hereabouts the game is to purchase one of these arks, tear it down, and build an even more immense but ultramodern house. Soon it will be possible to appreciate the old Naples only by looking at photographs.

Inland from Vanderbilt Beach is a flat area once full of orange groves. Today the crop is houses, dozens and dozens of them being planted in large subdivisions. Almost without exception, a hole is dug within a development's interior, the high water table fills it with water, and, presto, it acquires some quaint name and is dubbed a lake. The attraction for these inland-dwelling retirees is golf, golf every day of the year at a course built right in the subdivision or at many private ones that dot the area.

Most of the people who dwell in these environments are white. Few blacks are to be seen. Latinos are present in the supermarket, stocking shelves and running checkout counters, and they make up the crews employed by the various landscape companies that keep neat and tidy the lawns and shrubs that surround every house and condominium block. Indeed, some ambitious Latinos have set up their own house-cleaning operations and can be seen dashing about in spanking-clean pickup trucks. Some live in the city's few undeveloped backwaters but most have been forced to retreat a big jump inland. What with the awesome development apace, real estate taxes are effectively clearing the remaining prime land of any inhabitants of modest means.

Growth in upscale housing is also causing gridlock on the roads and threatens to jeopardize both the quantity and quality of drinking-water supplies. Only greed or extraordinary shortsightedness would seem to explain the adhesion of developers, mortgage lenders, and local government officials to the maxim *après moi le déluge*. Meanwhile, what is worth real worry is the immense disparity in wealth seen here, a disparity almost beyond belief in that the usual social pyramid has been stood on its head, the rich and the well-to-do far outnumbering the lower orders. At the same time, transient farm workers inland are paid a pittance and their periodic strikes and hunger marches have proved totally unavailing, this despite the local Catholic bishop saying open-air Masses to draw attention to their plight.

The bishop and a few other persons notwithstanding, it would not appear that the Christian community in southwest Florida is concerned about such disparities. The underclass might as well exist in El Salvador as in these United States. Having been a regular winter inhabitant of Naples, I find myself increasingly uncomfortable dwelling here.



Even the architecture of the local church has come to accentuate my unease. Seen from the road it emits Spanish mission characteristics. But once inside, visitors find themselves in an amphitheater-shaped structure. The interior walls are stucco but for a high wall behind the altar which is covered with squares of plain gray stone. Some of the stones protrude in a nondescript pattern that looks as if waiting to be carved into a figure. But that precisely is the point, the uncut stone symbolizing things to come, the kingdom still in the process of creation. Meanwhile the stations of the cross are tiny metal figures, almost folded-wire creations, set atop stone pillars along the side walls. But as the pillars are barely as high as the backs of the pews, these stations are not immediately in evidence. No crucifix faces down worshippers in this church. Coincidentally, perhaps, no kneelers are provided. Indeed, but for the nearly hidden stations of the cross, an iconoclast could not make improvement on the scene.

Perhaps it is the mission church suggested by the exterior that makes this disparity strike the visitor with such force. The mission cathedral in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has a life-size crucifix that vividly demonstrates what a really bloody and awful death was inflicted on Jesus. The Spanish colonialists were brutal, but they were realists. But those who can afford to live and pray in Naples today come from a different time and place. □

E.F. Roberts *is the Edwin H. Woodruff Professor Emeritus of Law at Cornell Law School.*

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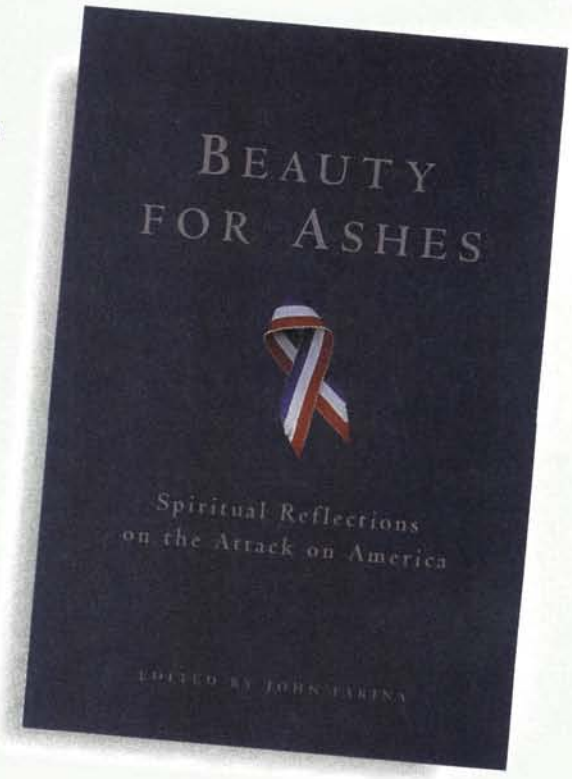

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